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The Beacon, April 17, 2009

Florida International University

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Course leads to on-campus dramatic series

PAGE 5

Legendary new coach arrives; speaks to media

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SPOTLIGHT

OPINION PAGE 4

The Congressional Black Caucus should have met with dissidents in Cuba earlier this month.

SPORTS PAGE 8



Team point guards eager to learn from former NBA All-Star.

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

Film festival will showcase the Go Green initiative the students' way.

LIFE! PAGE 5

Column: Can new gaming service live up to its promise?

OPINION PAGE 4

In order to reform American education, we must eliminate the established monopolistic system.

SPORTS PAGE 8

Golden Panthers use quality pitching to sweep the University of South Florida; Townsend has multi home run game.

LIFE! PAGE 6

Column: Steve Mesa looks to this summer's potential blockbusters.

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

Best places to relax before and after rocking out.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Black and White Circus Ball, April 17, 8 p.m. Need to laugh your finals away? Enjoy this comedy sketch improv show at the Miami Science Museum.

International Record Store Day, April 18, 9 p.m. Record stores are still thriving even through this iPod period. Spend this day celebrating our beloved independent record stores at Sweat Records.

Plaid! Concert Series, April 18, 10 p.m. Immerse yourself in as many plaid shirts as the eye can see at this concert series where there will be dozens of bands playing at Churchill's Pub.

AIDS Walk Miami, April 19, 8 a.m. Walk away all your weekend regrets for a cause at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Earth Fest, April 19, 10 a.m. Take a day to appreciate our splendid giant green home at Crandon Park Visitors and Nature Center.

For the complete calendar, please see page 6 or visit FIUSM.com/calendar.

WEATHER



FRIDAY

Partly cloudy
LOW: 69 HIGH: 80



SATURDAY

Partly cloudy
LOW: 69 HIGH: 80



SUNDAY

Partly cloudy
LOW: 71 HIGH: 82

CONTACTS

Editor in Chief 305-348-1580
chris.necuze@fiusm.com

UP Office 305-348-2709
news@fiusm.com

BBC Office 305-919-4722
bbc@fiusm.com

Tips & Corrections 305-348-2709
tips@fiusm.com

Advertising 305-348-6994
advertising@fiusm.com

SGA BUDGET INVESTIGATION: PART 2

Council seeks ways to exceed previous savings

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

The Student Government Association allocates money to students' resources and organizations every fiscal year. Their budget comes from the Activities and Service fee which is paid by every student and is currently \$10.52 per credit hour.

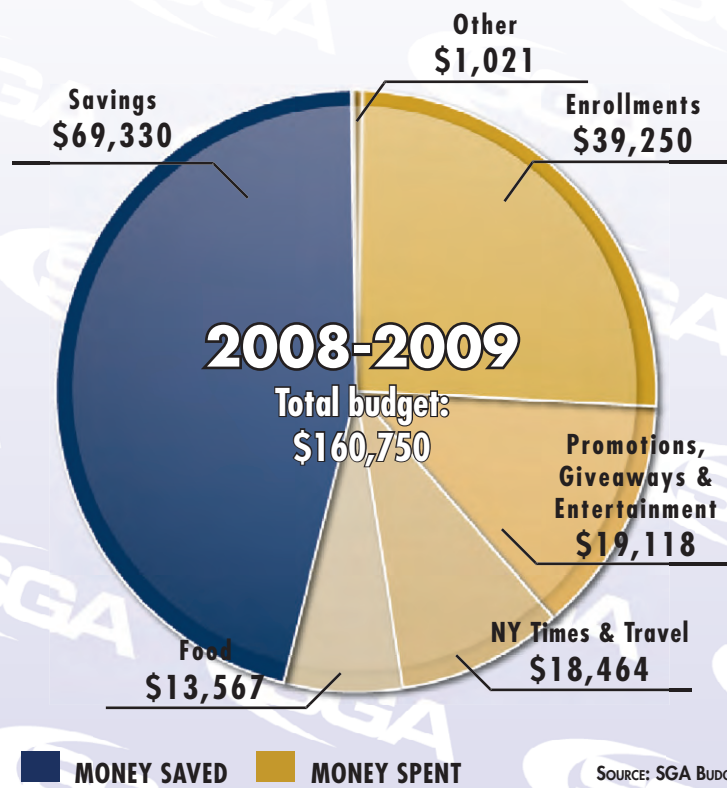
During the Spring term of every school year, University-wide and campus specific budget hearings are held, at which time, student government determines how to fund student organizations and clubs throughout the upcoming fiscal year.

Student Media analyzed SGA's budget; this is part two of a running series on how SGA has spent student fee money over the past three years.

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, Student Government at Biscayne Bay Campus had a budget of \$160,750. As of April 10, 2009, SGC-BBC has spent \$91,420.34, or 57 percent, of its budget. The four largest expenditures by SGC-BBC this fiscal year were emoluments, promotions and giveaways, food and travel. The emoluments account is used to pay SGA government officials. In 2008-2009, SGC-BBC spent \$39,250 on emoluments. Promotions and giveaways include lectures, fliers and items such as mugs and pencils. In 2008-2009, SGC-BBC spent \$19,118.96 on promotions and giveaways. On February 10, 2009, SGC-BBC spent \$16,250 on Lordly and Dame Inc., a company that specializes in

BUDGET, page 2

SGC-BBC EXPENDITURES



SGC-UP

Meyer discusses final plans

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

With his presidential term coming to a close, Student Government Council at University Park President Arthur J. Meyer still has a lot of work ahead of him before he steps down from his position on May 1.

Meyer, SGC-UP president for the 2008-2009 school year, reflected on his accomplishments and regrets while being in office. He ran on several major platform points including the expansion of the PantherTram system into a point-to-point system to alleviate traffic, the development of PantherTV and the implementation of a comprehensive Environmental Action Plan.

Meyer said during a farewell interview with Student Media that he is still pushing forward for the establishment of PantherTV, a television network for FIU.

"We're looking to secure funding for PantherTV within the next two weeks," he said.

To date, PantherTV has yet to be created and funded.

"It's not a one year thing where we start it and we're done and PantherTV is online. It's not something that can happen in one year," Meyer said. "That's one of the issues with one-year terms for presidents - that I can't see the program through. We're laying the foundation."

Meyer said that there were two failures during his administration.

"One of those were the environmental issues that we wanted to make a key goal during the

year. We would like to have seen more in that area. There were issues in respect to leadership in that area," Meyer said.

Meyer also said that he wished he had been more available but had to fulfill obligations as chairman of the Florida Students Association.

"Not by any means was that necessarily a failure. What resulted from that was definitely a disappointment. I have not been in this office as much as I had hoped to. I'm traveling a lot. It's put a toll on myself personally and on this office. Paige [LaPointe] and Anthony [Rionda] have done an excellent job of taking the reins while I'm gone," Meyer said.

Meyer discussed the Relay for Life incident when the organization, a charity for cancer treatment, was unable to hold its annual event at FIU Stadium. Student outrage ran high as rumor spread that football coach Mario Cristobal had scheduled a football practice that would interfere with the event, which had been planned during the Fall of 2008. Cristobal, however, stated that he would cooperate in any way possible to aid Relay for Life. The event was eventually moved from the football stadium to the front of the Ryder Business Building.

"Do I think that it tweaked the relationship between the student body and athletics? Most definitely. Do I think that the relationship between student groups and athletics has changed slightly? Sure. Do I think that it should? It may have to, so we understand the Athletics Department. It's a partnership that needs to be solidified," Meyer said.

MEYER, page 2

Scholarship competition FIU exclusive

SOLDANAYS MUJICA
Staff Writer

Once again, it's the annual University-wide Scholarship Competition and applications for the available scholarships are due online April 30.

The Scholarship Committee is awarding more than 100 scholarships, valued at a total \$100,000, from scholarship funds donated by private donors and held in trust by the FIU Foundation.

Incoming freshmen, current students, transfer students and graduate students can apply for most of these available scholarships just as long as they meet the requirements.

"We want to encourage current and future FIU undergraduates and graduate students to apply for these scholarships," said Scholarship Committee Co-Chair Consuelo Boronat in a media release.

The main requirement is for students to have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

There are other scholarships that require higher minimum GPAs, and three undergraduate scholarships require minimum GPAs of 2.5 or 2.75.

When students fill out the applications, they are required to attach two recommendation letters along with it.

The recommendation letters should be from professionals such as previous or former professors or employers and not from family or friends.

In order to apply, students can log on to their

SCHOLARSHIPS, page 2

SGC-BBC cuts spending in a number of key areas

BUDGET, page 1

booking guest speakers for colleges and universities. SGC-BBC Comptroller Carlos Becerra-Pineda said this year's administration was more conservative with its budget than previous administrations and made sure all money spent was in students' best interest.

"We tried not to waste a lot of money," Becerra-Pineda said. "If we saw an event or a lecture that was going to benefit the students, then we would do it."

In 2006-2007, the council spent \$18,140.16 on promotions and giveaways. Along with spending on events, promotions, giveaways and guest speakers, a

large amount of money was also spent to attract students to events. In 2008-2009, it spent \$13,566.54 on food for events and meetings. In 2006-2007, \$17,194 was spent on food. Becerra-Pineda admitted difficulties to get a good outcome of students for events and said offering food is a way to boost attendance.

"It's another way to attract people to events," Becerra-Pineda said. "But we also want people to see the information that is being present at these events that are held."

SAVING MONEY

Like many clubs and organizations, SGC-BBC has seen a steady decrease

in its operating budget and has been looking for ways to save.

Rafael Zapata, assistant director of Campus Life and advisor for SGC-BBC, said the council has combined retreats with other student leadership organizations and is cosponsoring many events with the Student Programming Council and other organizations on campus. Another area that is being looked at to cut down is its travel budget.

In 2006-2007, SGC-BBC spent \$18,956.41 on travel. The largest amount came from its retreat to Key Largo on June 1, 2007, which ended up costing \$3,104.98. In 2008-2009, SGC-BBC spent \$8,496.06 on travel — \$5,024.50 of which was spent on sending four students to the United States Student Association in Washington, D.C.

"The best way to save money for students immediately is to cut down travel expenditures as well as creating a free printing lab," said SGC-BBC President-elect Sholom Neistein.

BUDGET TRAINING

Matilde Gramling, director of Budget and Personnel, said that her office is responsible for reviewing all of the accounts in Student Affairs but doesn't approve every transaction made by clubs and organizations. That responsibility falls under each club or organization's advisor.

At SGC-BBC, that responsibility would fall to advisors Zapata and Becerra-Pineda. Throughout the year, Zapata said students are taught what A&S fees can and can't be spent on and advises SGC-BBC members on how best to use the funds they've been allocated.

"We teach them how you are supposed to spend

the money, how do you deal with contracts, a lot of training happens throughout the year," Zapata said.

Although advisors work with SGA members on how to handle their budget, Gramling was hired three years ago to oversee that A&S fees were being spent responsibly and, according to Gramling, this fiscal year was the best in terms of clubs and organizations maintaining their budgets and spending wisely.

"There has been a trend toward more accountability and responsibility," Gramling said in a past interview with *The Beacon*. "They know they are being held to be more accountable to any resources they've been given and know they have to be responsible because they are going to have to report on it at the end of the year."

Vice president of Student Affairs, Larry Lunsford, credits the improvement in how SGA spends and allocates A&S fees to the advisors.

"You truly can't have 18-22-year-olds handling \$10 million without any oversight," Lunsford said.

FUTURE SPENDING

According to Becerra-Pineda, there are \$30,000 left in the budget for SGC-BBC to spend and part of the money is going to be used to build a garden between Academic I and II.

Neistein's main goal is to make sure that A&S fees are used on student endeavors and making sure his administration is the most transparent in 2009-2010. Neistein plans to put every expenditure made by SGC-BBC on its Web site when he takes office.

"There will be no equivocations when it comes to students' awareness of budget expenditures," Neistein said.

Dance program bows out with show

MEENA RUPANI
Staff Writer

Due to budget concerns, the dance department is being phased out and will be holding its final performance.

The performance will be held from April 16-19 at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center.

According to Professor Joanne Barrett, one of the key organizers and choreographers, this final performance called "Perpetual Motions" will be showcasing student and faculty work along with various styles of dance.

"The performance showcases the students dancing and some of the senior graduate choreography works. Also, the evening will exemplify our diverse program which will include the styles of Afro-Peruvian, Afro-Brazilian, hip-hop, physical

dance theater and contemporary ballet," Barrett said.

In order to make this performance more special than the rest, Barrett has made sure that all the work the dance department has done in the past will also be showcased.

"We will also have a continuous video playing in the lobby of past guest choreographers and faculty. Our special topics class, which devotes its time to improvisation, will do specific work outside the theater while audience is arriving," Barrett said.

In addition, each night will have live music and performances, as well as an audio-visual, multimedia presentation, according to the "Perpetual Motions" press release.

A caterer has been invited to provide different foods for each night of the performance

and the improvisation will differ for each night as well, according to Barrett.

One of the lead dancers in the performance is Priscilla Marrero, a senior dance major, who is looking forward to dancing the entire show and not just one specific section.

"I am most looking forward to the entire performance. Having the opportunity to share the stage with exceptional artists-choreographers, dancers and production team for the last time as students will be magical," Marrero said.

In regards to the program being cut, Marrero is saddened by the sudden change in her department even though she is graduating this year, but will continue to support the arts.

"It is unfortunate that our program has been cut since it has been providing

professionals in the local and national dance community for many years. There is a high percentage of dance educators and professional artists that are alumni of our program.

However, with this in mind, it has given us the stronger will to be advocates in our field and to continue encouraging others to believe in our art form," Marrero said.

Barrett wants this final performance to be for the students and to have them shine.

"As a choreographer, professor and dance aficionado, I am looking forward to seeing the students blossom with each performance. They are very talented movement inventors and performers, so I get a thrill watching every dance unfold into beauty," Barrett said.

Competition offers 19 scholarships

SCHOLARSHIPS, page 1

Panthersoft account at <http://my.fiu.edu>, then click on Self Service and proceed to the Student Center tab.

Once there, the student goes under Academics where there will be a link that reads Scholarship Application.

The link leads to the application center and recommendation letters can be uploaded through there.

Every FIU student can sign up to one from the 19 scholarships available.

Besides the GPA requirements, there are other scholarships that require proof of financial needs, or for students in specific majors or with specific career goals, or for students with community service and human rights experience.

Then there are scholarships for Immaculata-LaSalle High School graduates and for employees or the family of employees of specific companies (i.e., Sedano's and Coral Gables Hospital).

The chances of winning one of

these scholarships, if the students fit the specific requirements, are much greater than for a general scholarship.

In last year's competition, an estimated 10 percent of scholarship applicants won scholarships. Most students who were awarded scholarships had high GPAs.

To see the requirements of each scholarship available, go to <http://scholarships.fiu.edu/> and look under Scholarship Descriptions for further details on each scholarship.

THE BEACON

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INFORMATION

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CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated April 15, the front page picture caption should have said the persons on the bikes were members of Pi Kappa Phi, not Pikes.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors.

Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

Meyer recounts a year of service, accomplishments

MEYER, page 1

He pointed to the retention of Marty's Cube, the cube in front of Deuxieme Maison, and acquisition of student suites in FIU Stadium during games as major accomplishments during his presidency.

In an earlier article in *The Beacon*, Meyer said that Marty Margulies, creator of Marty's Cube, donated the piece to the University after receiving a letter written by Meyer.

"It may seem insignif-

icant. Students will go to the cube and spin it before an exam for good luck. It's one of the few traditions our University has. It was a generous gift," said Meyer. "It's a great opportunity. We're the only Division I-A football program where students have a suite. Now, this gives us the opportunity to network with the cream of the crop out there in our community that has donated and given their time and money to the University."

Meyer said that the suite is available with no charge

to the student body for the next three years.

"After our three years is up, we've been able to negotiate with various administration that we will be able to acquire this suite at a cost, at a fixed rate, for the next seven years," Meyer said.

"A legacy is always nice to leave. I'll leave my legacy to others' opinions. What I truly hope to leave with my students is that they know they elected someone who cared about this school from the bottom of his heart," Meyer said.

GREEN ON FILM

Festival showcases students' environmental initiatives

DAIANA KUCAWCA
Copy Editor

The Wolfe University Center hosts a series of green events throughout the year, but this time they wanted to do things a little different: let students decide.

Zach K. Trautenberg, IT and marketing specialist, decided to organize the "Wolfe University Center Go Green Film Festival," a contest in which students can make and submit a five-minute original public service announcement in DVD format. Participants can choose from one of the following topics: the "Do's and Don'ts of Recycling," "10 Things You Can Do to Green Your Life" or "Coastal Environment at Biscayne Bay Campus."

Trautenberg said he wanted to do something about environmental awareness that didn't involve the University telling students what to do.

"We wanted to engage students and staff to learn from their viewings," Trautenberg said. "What better way to do it than a film contest?"

Students can submit applications to participate in the contest until today, but the films are due April 20.

Entries will be screened on Earth Day, April 22, at the BBC's Wolfe Center in Panther Square at noon and voted on by students and staff attending. Food and refreshments will be served during the event. According to Trautenberg, any genre and type of film is acceptable as long as it is creative.

"The idea is to get the message across," Trautenberg said, referring to the film festival's message: environmental awareness.

According to Trautenberg, the contest was made only for students, "but if you want to include your little brother and sister in the video, it's OK."

All contestants will be receiving an organic T-shirt regardless of how many votes they get. T-shirts will be grey or blue and will read on the front "Organic Florida International University." On the back they'll read "I am a green T-shirt." The shirts' brand is Edun Live, which makes clothes in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Africa, to raise money to fight AIDS in the country where "over 30 percent of the workforce [in the country] is HIV positive," according to the brand's Web site.

Contest winners will get a \$100 certificate for the FIU Bookstore and will have their PSAs

streamed on the WUC's Web site.

Trautenberg said the inspiration for the film festival came from the "Chill Out: Campus Solutions to Global Warming" national contest. The competition recognizes campuses who propose original global warming solutions videos by streaming them on their Web site and awarding free concerts to the best campus-based climate action, according to the National Wildlife Association's Web site, who organizes the event.

According to Trautenberg, the environmental coordinator for the Office of the Vice Provost, Jennifer Grimm, came out with the ideas for the proposed topics, which she's helping promote to all the different environmental science classes.

"I think it's a great thing to bring the green initiative to people so that they can get involved," Grimm said.

Among the students getting involved in the festival are the members of the Film Union Club. Natalya Cohen, a freshman journalism major and the club's president, said students from her club will submit entries individually. She is also planning on focusing on the "10 Things You Can Do to Green Your Life" theme.

"It's nice they're doing something artistic that's green as well," Cohen said. "When you

have a group of students trying to do something together, that itself raises awareness."

This isn't the first time the WUC has done something for the green initiative.

Gregory Olson, senior director of student affairs and WUC director, said the University had participated on other green initiatives previously to comply with the University's Commitment Task Force established on September 17, 2007, which aimed at having long-term efforts of environmental sustainability in the community.

Other WUC events with an environmentally-friendly theme have included the "Go Green Luncheon," where an event planner taught students how to make greener events; the "Go Green Bingo," where students had to complete a bingo based on green activities they had done and the "Go Green Day," where a fair was set up and businesses from the community came to show their green products, according to Trautenberg.

"We wanted to get students to do something before break. This was just part of going green," Olson said. "If it's successful, we'll do it again."

Applications for the film festival can be found at the WUC Web site at wuc.fiu.edu.

WEEKENDS WITH PARADISE

Pre-gaming plans for this concert season

Summer is here and that means my favorite time of year is about to start: concert season.

Those who know me would probably never peg me as the rock show, but I have a mini confession – I used to be a semi-emo kid in high school, only I never rocked the hair style.

But as a result of my emo days, I have a soft spot for concerts, and I know first-hand the turmoil that everyone goes through before and after a show when the question is asked, "Where am I going to hang out?"

This week's New Found Glory concert at Revolution Live in Fort Lauderdale gave me the chance to find the perfect spots to chill before and after moshing and getting hit in the head by crowd surfers.

To pre-game a show, you could spend the afternoon in the parking lot of the venue drinking beer from the trunk of a friend's car, or you can be more civil and go to Cafe Bambini, at 3073 NE 163 St., North Miami Beach.

This is an organic sandwich, coffee, pizza and ice cream store that provides a great relaxing atmosphere.

The place has white seats, light purple walls and dark wood floors – all of which screams modern and welcoming.

This place is not only great for

pre-gaming a concert, but also for those who have kids. For only \$5, you can eat a good meal while the kids play with the Wii and other toys they have in the play area.

I had a tuna sandwich for \$7.95, which to me was made perfectly because there was no mayo mixed with the fish.

Heck, they even gave me big chunks of tuna instead of the shredded pieces that normally come with a tuna sandwich. It also came with chips that tasted like Funyuns, only they were long and colorful.

The menu is healthy (there is nothing fried or oily) and the food gave me the energy I needed to fight off people at the concert – no one has ever been to a pop-punk show without hitting someone or getting hit.

Even though this place is kid-friendly, don't let it stop you from enjoying it. The kids aren't too loud and the mood is so relaxing that you will be thinking more about moshing than screaming kids.

But the most important part of a concert is the post-game. You just want to go somewhere that you can go over play-by-play with your friends about everything that happened 10 minutes earlier.

I love going to Steve's Pizza, at 12101 Biscayne Blvd., North

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS



CYNTHIA FRANCISQUINI/THE BEACON

SPRING SNACKS: Noor Nusrath, a senior nutrition science major, serves Warren Webster, a junior advertising major, healthy food alternatives, demonstrated in the "Be Hip Be Fit Series: Health Food Seminar" in Panther Square, April 13. The seminar focused on making quick meals without cooking.

Miami. If there was ever anywhere that has a punk-rock feel to it, this is it.

The place just looks hardcore, even though the entire restaurant is a little bigger than the average dorm room. The smell of pizza in this small area is total intoxication.

You can't help but notice that every piece of furniture is written on, and I think they ran out of space on the chairs and tables because the beige walls are now starting to see marks on them. Of course, I added my name onto the chair I was sitting on.

I ordered a cheese pizza and

right from the time you order you notice that these people take pizza seriously. Their motto is "the best pizza you've ever had."

It may sound cynical but think about it, at most shows, food and drinks cost so much it is way more effective to eat and drink beforehand.

The last concert I went to, it was \$3 for a slice of pizza that was the size of a Pizza Hut slice and had probably been sitting under heat lamps for eight hours.

Why not wait an extra couple of hours and get a slice for 50 cents less that is twice the size of the one from most venues? It's

a win-win situation, and in these economical times, every dime counts.

So this summer make sure you go to a show or two. Concert season is almost in full swing and no matter what kind of show you are going to, you will enjoy these two spots, I promise.

Read Weekends with Paradise every other Friday for more tips on places to go in the North Miami area. If you have any suggestions, e-mail paradise.afshar@fiusm.com. The columnist pays for all food and experiences.

CUBA SERIES: TWO OF TWO

DIPLOMATIC SLIPS

There is no better voice than Cuba's freedom fighters

JULIO MENACHE
Staff Writer

What do Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Cristina Kirchner of Argentina and Nicholas Sarkozy of France all have in common?

Each is a democratically-elected leader.

Each is the president of one of the wealthiest capitalist countries in the world.

And each has expressed interest in re-establishing relations with the only communist government in the Western Hemisphere, Cuba.

Now the United State's own Congressional Black Caucus, made up of African-American democratic legislators from various states, has joined the ranks of these leaders by not only meeting with Raul and Fidel Castro, but also committing their cardinal sin: refusing to meet with the much repressed dissident leaders on the island.

When pressed about not meeting with democratic activists on the island, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), head of the caucus, noted she was not coming to set terms to negotiate, but merely to "talk and listen."

Yet the voices of these dissidents have long been muffled by Fidel Castro's communist dictatorship. By not agreeing to "talk and listen" to the opposition and include the groups in their visit, these legislators have set the wrong note for future talks between Democratic President Barack Obama and Raul Castro.

Since the beginning of Obama's presidency, the movement for better ties

with Cuba has gained traction. Panama and El Salvador, two countries who had severed ties with the regime in the past, now look to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Latin American leaders also look to bring up U.S.-Cuba ties in the upcoming Summit of the Americas and call for the United States to end its embargo against the country and establish diplomatic ties.

Each leader who has come to Cuba has shown not only a great deal of hypocrisy, but also compliance of what is occurring on the island. Michelle Bachelet of Chile visited the island last February only to mention that the dissidents were not in her protocol plan.

What's interesting to note is the fact that Bachelet herself was once a political prisoner and has actually seen the horrors of dictatorship first-hand under Augusto Pinochet.

Oswaldo Paya, arguably Cuba's top dissident, described the plight of the opposition leaders best:

"We now stand alone because all Latin American countries have left [the dissidents] behind, all the way from Mexico to Chile and Argentina," said Paya in a statement on his Web site.

If Rep. Lee and her colleagues had taken the time to move away from protocol and taken the time to visit opposition leaders, they would have seen a diverse group of civil society that has fought to stay alive. The fact is that the regime's greatest crime is not allowing

for any other forms of association outside the Communist Party. It is from this that each and every other human rights violation stems out, leading to censorship of opposing views, outlawing of political parties and labor unions outside the Castros' control, and the eventual jailing of anyone who stands a chance to oppose the regime.

If the Congressional Black Caucus would have met with dissidents, they would have found out that nearly 80 percent of political prisoners in Cuba are Afro-Cuban or *mulatto*, who use methods of non-violence, such as civil disobedience and hunger strikes to gain worldwide attention to their plight, much like Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated in his struggle against segregation.

Yet, interestingly enough, as the world has been demanding dialogue between Cuba and the United States, it has already happened. Oswaldo Paya in 2005 instituted Program All Cubans, a simple survey that called for a dialogue between Cubans, both on the island and in exile, to list what type of government they wish to see in Cuba's future.

The 16,000 Cubans and Cubans in exile have come to terms with seeing Cuba become more democratic, with free and fair elections with multiple parties. Greater freedom of the press, assembly, enterprise, as well as amnesty for all of Cuba's political prisoners was also included.

Now Paya is looking to continue working on this "living document" by calling for another national dialogue to take place. The main objec-

Quick Facts:

- The Congressional Black Caucus was founded in 1976 in Washington, D.C.
- President Barack Obama recently eased travel restrictions for Cuba. Since 2004, Cuban Americans could only make three trips to the country per year.
- Raul Castro is Cuba's current leader.



tive of the dialogue would be to "guarantee respect, in law and in practice, for the civic, political and human rights of all Cuban citizens, and for their free participation in the process of democratic change and national reconciliation."

"The [Cuban] people are the legitimate owners of this country, although they have their hands tied," said Oswaldo Paya in a statement for the Ibero-American summit back in 1999. "All the statesmen and personalities who visit us should realize that. You are welcome – but don't ignore the owners of the house."

If the United States is truly committed to establishing better ties with Cuba and truly talking out any of its issues, it must include dissidents in the conversation in order to secure that Cuba may someday see a democratically-elected government that secures its people's human rights, both in writing and in practice.

Solutions to our flawed public school system do exist

ODETTE BARRIENTOS
Staff Writer

I've grown to really hate monopoly – the lack of choice in a country that threatens freedom. There is something very scary about companies that use their power to crush the competition. But what happens when there is no competition and there never has been?

This is exactly what is happening with the public education system in America today. Since the beginning of our kindergarten days, we have been told where we will go to school, what we will have for lunch and a myriad of other things.

For 13 years, everything is decided for you. Whether those decisions work for you, it doesn't matter. Taxpayer dollars are going to pay for even the worst education, whether you like it or not.

Unfortunately, American schools are government monopolies.

Some get the best out of public education; others are cheated out of a good deal. There are people in this country that graduate high

school with barely enough skills to compete in the real world. Even worse, some just never graduate.

When compared on an international level, American kids fall behind and fade away to Asian and European counterparts. A 2003 study conducted by UNICEF took the averages from five different international education studies. Researchers ranked the United States No. 18 out of 24 nations in relative effectiveness of its educational system.

The UNICEF report found that educational success or failure is not directly linked to funding, citing that there is no clear link between student-to-teacher ratios and test results. Yet, I've always heard that more money needs to be put into public education.

"If money were the solution, the problem would already be solved. We've doubled per pupil spending, adjusting for inflation over the last 30 years, and yet schools aren't better," said Jay Greene, author of *Education Myths*.

Scores from the 2006 Program

for International Student Assessment showed that U.S. 15-year-olds fell behind their peers from many industrialized countries. The average science score of U.S. students lagged behind those in 16 out of 30 countries. In math, only four countries had average scores lower than the U.S.

What could possibly be wrong with our public education system? And what is the solution to America's growing problem?

The solution is choice; getting rid of the government monopoly in the school system.

Taxpayer dollars should follow children wherever they choose to go in the form of a voucher or education tax credits. This is not a radical move, it's just smarter. It is a method already used in America.

Existing voucher programs include food stamps, low-income housing vouchers, the GI Bill and Pell Grants for college students, federal day-care grants and Social Security. Social Security distributes about \$400 billion per year to millions of seniors to spend as they

If parents chose schools for their children, standards would be set and met on the threat of shutting down. Choice would lead to competition.

wish. Why can't kids in America choose to spend the money they're entitled to in the school of their choice?

If parents chose schools for their children, standards would be set and met on the threat of shutting down. The "D" and "F" schools would disappear because no one would want to send their children there. Choice would lead to competition; competition would lead to better performance.

Attempts to promote choice in U.S. legislation have failed repeat-

edly in most states. In January 2006, Florida's Supreme Court shut down "opportunity scholarships," which was the state's attempt at promoting competition. Other similar bills geared for low-income students and students with low GPAs have been rejected in states such as Indiana, Missouri and South Carolina.

Given that children in the American public school system are assigned their schools, there is no competition. Schools don't care to work harder and compete with each other. If this system adopted the strategies of higher education, where colleges compete to be our No. 1 choice, more schools in America would be doing better. We wouldn't rank as low as we do on international levels.

Ultimately, American kids aren't falling behind because they are "stupid" or "lazy"; they are victims of a flawed system. Getting rid of the existing monopoly and granting choices would be a step in the right direction. The child in America has indeed been left behind and there is no excuse for this.

TALKING HEADS

Acting, directing course spawns television show

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

In mid-afternoon, a dimly lit room in Deuxieme Maison flip-flops between the tense drama of a soap opera and the energetic free-flow of college theatre.

This is Professor Phillip Church's course, Introduction to Acting & Directing for TV & Film, that inspired an ambitious project to produce a scripted drama series right in FIU.

Church decided that producing the show, "The Living and the Learning," would give theatre majors practical experience into the world of TV.

"Because of the cross-over nature of theatre and film it is not realistic anymore to just have experience in theatre acting," said Church, whose students have been gaining valu-

able experience in camera work, directing, production management and screenwriting. "This show is something that will engage the entire FIU community, although the nine main characters will be played by the students in my class, we will open auditions for secondary and supporting actors."

The show will partner the 12 theatre majors currently enrolled in the course with a dozen amateur screenwriters, directors and producers.

Although it is still in its initial stages, Church summoned a meeting on the morning of April 11, that incited creative brainstorming and dialogue between the future writers and producers of the show.

The group came from such diverse majors as chemistry, English, journalism, business and advertising.

"Our hope is to show the human condition and structure of campus life and how it is reflected," said Church during the

meeting. "We are not trying to make a *High School Musical*, we want to express truths, but avoiding becoming a public service announcement."

The show aims to produce twelve 20-minute episodes and will follow the lives, relationships and conflicts of nine diverse and dynamic characters, some of which will be interrelated.

The specifics are still in the drawing board, but during the meeting the possibility of having a Student Government Association official, a college journalist and an athlete on the show were mentioned.

Teamwork between such a diverse group of students trying to visualize the central themes and characters representative of a student body is one of the concerns of production. But during the meeting all future writers and directors were enthusiastic to offer ideas and work together.

"The challenge of a project like this is trying to speak for a community as diverse as a

college campus," said Sebastian Church, journalism major from University of Central Florida and the son of Phillip Church, who will be screenwriting for the show. "It is going to be difficult to conceive but the important thing is that we all collaborate."

Dante Medina, a public relations freshman, believes it is important to feature characters that are often misunderstood.

"We should not only hold on to the usual roles, but we should also have characters, like loners, that often go unnoticed," Medina said.

The show will start airing in the Fall of 2009 but during the summer the production crew will start scheduling episodes and hopes to produce one or two of the shows.

The episodes will be screened throughout the University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus during the Fall.

VIVAX

GAMES GALORE

Online video game streaming debuts

COLUMN



JONATHAN DAVILA

At the annual Game Developer's Conference that took place March 24-27 in San Francisco, the world was given its introduction to OnLive, an online video game service that will supposedly render high-end PCs and consoles obsolete.

OnLive will stream videogames directly to your PC with essentially no latency while super servers do all the hard work for your PC. All that's required is a one-megabyte browser plug-in and a monthly fee, with pricing yet to be announced. Ubisoft, EA, Take-Two and other publishers

have already signed themselves on to the publish games for OnLive. *Crysis* and *Grand Theft Auto IV* were actually among the titles demoed at GDC.

So this is it. OnLive will revolutionize gaming.

No, wait. It's going to fail. Miserably.

Actually, I really don't know what to think.

On one hand, I'm intrigued at the possibility of never having to upgrade my PC or console to play the latest and greatest of games. I never played *Crysis* because my PC is just not as young and energetic as it used to be. Never will I have to worry about such a scenario again if OnLive delivers on

its promises.

On the other hand, there is the issue of bandwidth.

When the mighty Al Gore invented the Internet, I don't think he foresaw one billion people watching

streaming, HD videos on YouTube in 2013. Comcast has already placed a cap on residential Internet use to take steps toward keeping our online highways uncongested. So what will happen when and if millions of users

are trying to play the latest Madden or *Grand Theft Auto* via OnLive?

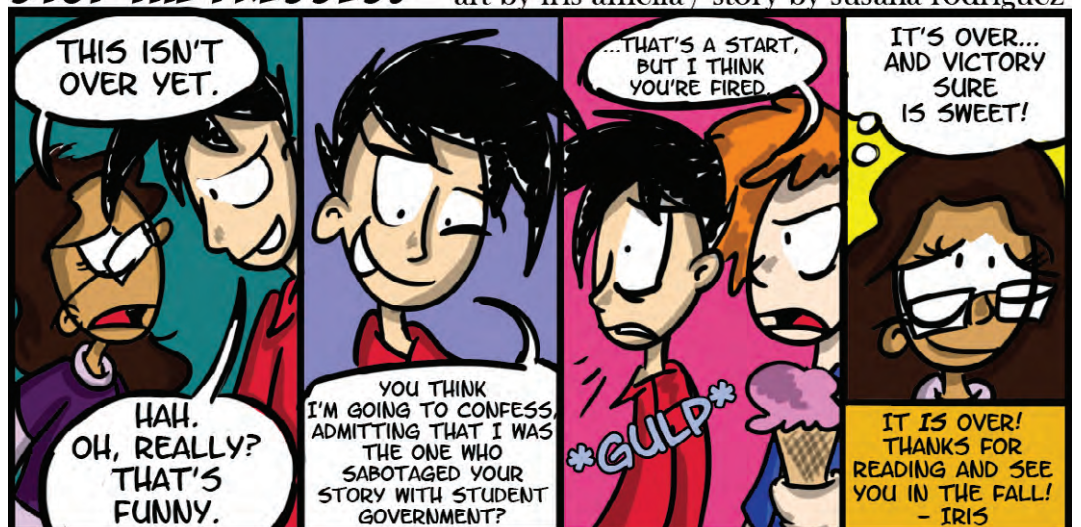
OnLive servers, using an extremely complicated algorithm that's been

GAMES, page 6

diversions

STOP THE PRESSES!

art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez



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OnLive servers, using an extremely complicated algorithm that's been

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Bandwidth, servers game stream issues

GAMES, page 5

in the works for seven years, will be compressing these huge video games. Standard definition games will be delivered over a 1.5 megabits-per-second connection, and 720 pixels-per-inch definition will be delivered over a 5 megabits-per-second connection. Imagine playing streamed video games like you watch streamed videos on YouTube.

Is there enough Internet juice out there for OnLive to pump these HD games out? Will it really deliver on its promise of lag-free gaming via compression?

I'm not an Internet know-it-all, but I have my doubts. And what about online multiplayer? It'd be great to finally challenge my fellow *Street Fighter IV* players that don't have the same console as I do. And the one-on-one gaming like that might work just fine via OnLive.

But what about playing *Call of Duty: World at War*? How will that work out with 16 players streaming data from the match simultaneously?

While OnLive has yet to prove itself, though, rumors are already circulating about the service setting itself to be bought out by Microsoft or Google.

Are we destined for a future of lag free, state-of-the-art gaming, courtesy of those who "do no evil," without worrying about upgrading our home technology? Or will OnLive fall on its face like the Sega Saturn?

Only time will tell.

THE CINEMATIC

Mutants, robots here for summer screens

COLUMN



STEVE MESA

Summer is approaching. Whether you like it or not, franchises will be revived and some original movies will crop up that aren't sequels or prequels. The summer could also be billed with the return of veteran directors such as Sam Raimi and Quentin Tarantino with new films. Here are some upcoming films that are likely to keep you in the movie theater until school starts again.

MAY 1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

Last time we saw Wolverine (Hugh Jackman), he sunk his metal claws into Jean Grey/Phoenix (Famke Janssen) to save the world in 2006's *X-Men: The Last Stand*. Three years later, Jackman returns to the role that made him famous in origins story of Logan/Wolverine. Some characters from the previous films are revisited such as *X-Men's* Victor Creed/Sabertooth (Live Schreiber) and *X-2's* William Stryker (Danny Huston). New characters introduced from the X-Men universe include Deadpool (Ryan Reynolds) and Gambit (Taylor Kitsch).

MAY 21 TERMINATOR SALVATION

Despite its notoriety for being the set where Christian Bale underwent his infamous rant, *Terminator Salvation* is the franchise's fourth film and the first one that does not feature "The Governator" Arnold Schwarzenegger. Fifteen years after the events of *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, John Connor (Bale) leads the resistance fighting Skynet and their army of Terminators in the year 2018. Connor recovers

a Terminator who calls himself Marcus Wright (Sam Worthington), whose last memory was being on death row. Together, Connor and Marcus must team up to infiltrate Skynet and destroy it from the inside.

MAY 29 DRAG ME TO HELL

Sam Raimi (*Evil Dead* and the *Spider-Man* trilogies) returns to his horror and supernatural roots in *Drag Me to Hell*. Christine (Allison Lohman) is a Los Angeles loan officer who refuses to give an old woman an extension on her home loan. Several hours later, the old woman attacks Christine on her way to her car and places a powerful curse that will take Christine's soul to hell in 72 hours. Haunted by an evil spirit and misunderstood by her boyfriend (Justin Long), Christine seeks a seer's help to save her soul from eternal damnation.

JUNE 24 TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN

Michael Bay returns to the director's chair for the sequel of last summer's hit movie, *Transformers*. After their first epic battle on Earth, Starscream returns to Cybertron and assumes control of the Decepticons where he returns to Earth to destroy the Autobots and enslave the human race. Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox, Tyrese Gibson and John Turturro are among the cast members returning for their second *Transformers* outing.

AUGUST 7 G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF COBRA

The Hasbro action figures known for their "kung fu grip" are coming to the big screen thanks to director Stephen Sommers (*The Mummy*, *Van Helsing*) and producer Lorenzo

di Bonaventura. The movie is an origins story of the rise of the Cobra organization as well as the first of many conflicts between Cobra and the Global Integrated Joint Operating Entity. On the side of the elite G.I. Joe squad is team leader Hawk (Dennis Quaid), lead soldier Duke (Channing Tatum) and mute ninja Snake Eyes (Ray Park). In the other corner, there is the Cobra organization with a weapons designer (Christopher Eccleston), a spy (Sienna Miller) and Cobra commander (Joseph Gordon-Levitt).

AUGUST 21 INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

Quentin Tarantino's sixth film is set during World War II where a lieutenant, Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt), organizes a group of Jewish soldiers (including director Eli Roth, and "The Office"'s B.J. Novak) known as "The Basterds" and joins forces with a German actress and undercover agent (Diane Kruger) to take down the Third Reich. *Inglourious Basterds* also features an outstanding all-star cast that includes Mike "Austin Powers" Myers, Cloris Leachman and Samuel L. Jackson as the narrator.



THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

FRIDAY •
APRIL 17

WHAT: Aterciopelados and Curumin
WHEN: 7 p.m.
WHERE: North Beach Bandshell
CONTACT: 305-672-5202

WHAT: Black and White Circus Ball
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: Miami Science Museum
CONTACT: 305-332-5817

WHAT: Glocca Morra
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: The Vagabond
CONTACT: 305-379-0508

WHAT: Miami Latin Gay Film festival
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Colony Theatre
CONTACT: 305-674-1026

WHAT: Classical Music Performance
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: Herbert & Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Concert Hall
CONTACT: 305-348-0496

SATURDAY •
APRIL 18

WHAT: International Record Store Day
WHEN: 9 p.m.
WHERE: Sweat Records
CONTACT: 305-758-5862

WHAT: Plaid! Concert Series
WHEN: 10 p.m.
WHERE: Churchill's Pub
CONTACT: 305-757-1807

WHAT: Gay Pride Festival
WHEN: 12 p.m.
WHERE: Lummus Park
CONTACT: miamibeachgaypride.com

WHAT: Los Amigos Invisibles
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: La Covacha
CONTACT: 305-594-3717

WHAT: En Plein Air
WHEN: 10 a.m.
WHERE: Deering Estate at Cutler
CONTACT: 305-235-1668 ext. 7

SUNDAY •
APRIL 19

WHAT: AIDS Walk Miami
WHEN: 8 a.m.
WHERE: Miami Beach Convention Center
CONTACT: 305-673-7311

WHAT: Earth Fest
WHEN: 10 a.m.
WHERE: Crandon Park Visitors and Nature Center
CONTACT: 305-323-8858

WHAT: DC – 13
WHEN: 9 p.m.
WHERE: Buck 15
CONTACT: 305-534-5488

WHAT: Heart of a Chef Festival
WHEN: 12 p.m.
WHERE: Jungle Island
CONTACT: 305-674-3020

WHAT: Miami Super Boat Grand Prix
WHEN: 9 a.m.
WHERE: Bicentennial Park
CONTACT: 305-358-7550

Compiled by Mariana Ochoa

\$4BN HEDGE FUND SEEKS PART-TIME QUANTITATIVE ASSISTANT

LOCATION: Coral Gables, FL

DESCRIPTION:

Multi-billion dollar hedge fund seeks a part-time quantitative assistant. Current roles would be to process financial data, automate investment process, etc.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Proficient in Excel VBA macro programming
2. Fluent in spoken and written English, and great communication skills
3. 25+ hours per week, of which 4-5 hours will be in the weekends
4. Working permit is required (for non-US citizens)
5. Experience in other programming languages, and in database is a plus, such as Microsoft Access, C/C++, etc
6. Quantitative experience on FactSet, Bloomberg, and CapitalIQ (equity/debt screening etc) is a plus
7. Strong background in mathematics or related disciplines a plus
8. Finance/Economics background a plus

Please submit resumes to quantitative@firtree.com

New hire creates recruiting buzz

THOMAS, page 8

exit in the Sun Belt Conference tournament.

Thomas' recent stop with the New York Knicks does not sparkle the way his stellar career as a point guard did for the Detroit Pistons in the 1980s.

In September 2007, he and Madison Square Garden were sued for sexual harassment by employee Anucha Browne Sanders. MSG and the Knicks were ordered to pay \$11.6 million for the incident, and Thomas was not found personally liable.

After recently enduring two losing seasons with the Knicks, Thomas said he is prepared to prove his worth in college basketball and defend his professional coaching career. Thomas preceded his period with the Knicks with three playoff appearances with the Indiana Pacers.

"If you're speaking overall, I would say that I have had three successful seasons and two losing seasons," Thomas said of his tenures with the Pacers and Knicks. "So I would say that I'm up."

Thomas, who coped with criticism near the end of his stint with the Knicks, does not brush aside the assessments of critics.

"Critics are necessary, and not always wrong," Thomas said. "Sometimes they are wrong, but that doesn't mean that I cannot learn lessons from that. I have won at every level, and if you're going to get to the top of the mountain at every level there will be a lot of people that criticize you."

RECRUITING BOOST

The Golden Panther brass believes that Thomas has the ability to attract among the best recruits worldwide. The 12-time NBA All-Star is a popular figure for his prowess with the Pistons a few decades ago.

"In the last 48 hours, I have gotten more than 500 text messages and e-mails from potential student athlete basketball players," Garcia said. "Obviously we will stay within the NCAA rules, but the kind of athletes that Isiah Thomas will attract will be the best anywhere not only in this state but the entire country."

Garcia sees no boundaries to acquire future players.

"We are an international school, our team right now is composed of a bunch of international players. We are not going to leave any stone unturned," Garcia said. "I've seen the way that he can recruit. I have always said that everything in life revolves around recruiting whether it's a coach, a dean, a staff member, or a spouse. It's all about recruiting."

CLASSIFIEDS

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Starting guard expects to learn from new coach

POINT GUARDS, page 7

tive and show us a lot of little things we've never experienced. It was crazy I was looking at a Hall of Fame point guard. I never imagined the day that he would coach us."

CONSULTANT

Art Alvarez is the president and CEO of the Amateur Athletic Union Miami Tropics; he coached Soto before he reached the Division I level. Alvarez said he consulted Thomas about Soto and other players he had worked with.

"We had a nice conver-

sation. We wanted to make sure that we were on the same page," Alvarez told *The Beacon* following the press conference on April 15. "Not only with Josue Soto and Freddy but the Martavis Kee transfer from temple and J.C. Otero. I wanted to make sure he had a plan for those kids. He does have a plan, and we're going to be working together for a long time."

Alvarez thinks Thomas is the teacher Soto needs to improve himself as a point guard.

"Bringing Isiah in and giving him the opportunity to teach Soto and show him that he's a point guard as well," Alvarez said. "I think he's the right coach for his development."

COACH ROUCO

Former head coach Sergio Rouco was re-assigned on April 13 by Athletic Director Pete Garcia. His staff recruited Soto two years ago, but the starting point guard has yet to contact Rouco.

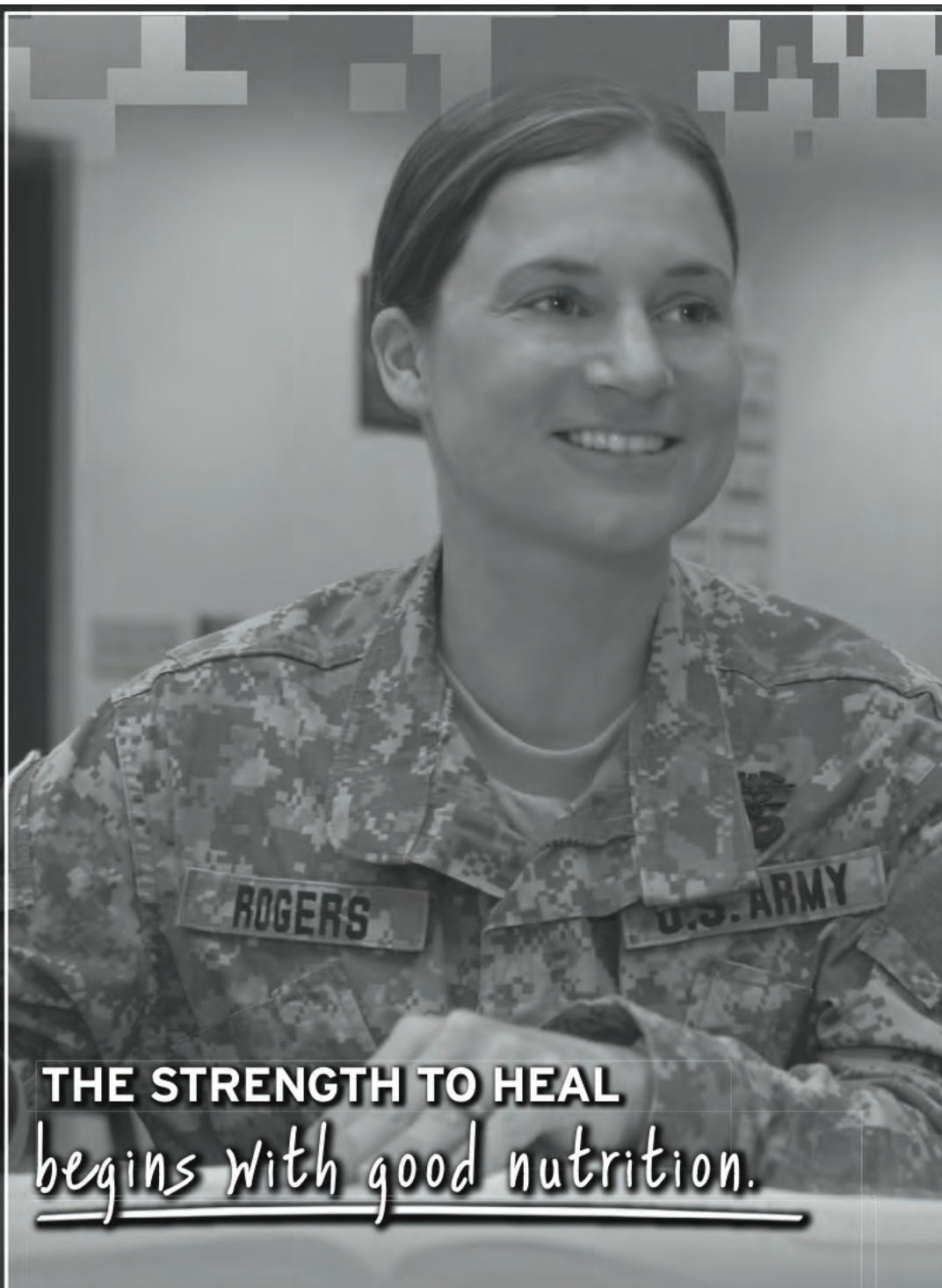
"I'm planning to, but I don't think it's a great time to talk to him," Soto said. "I think he's going to be a little hurt. I still think he's a great coach."

He did not know if any other player had spoken to Rouco following his removal from the head coach position.

Rouco coached at the University for five years and posted a 55-94 record.

Soto is looking ahead and wants his new coach to show him how to become a better defender and leader.

"He was a great defender, a great leader; that's why he's in the Hall of Fame," Soto said. "If we're going to be successful, I need to be the leader."



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LEGEND UNVEILED



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

BRINGING FAME: Isiah Thomas was announced as the new head coach of the Golden Panthers' basketball team on April 15. His five-year deal is worth approximately \$1.1 million, according to Athletic Director Pete Garcia. Thomas compiled a 187-223 record during his five-year NBA coaching career.

Coach gives away first year's salary, brings troubled past

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

When new FIU men's basketball coach Isiah Thomas approached the podium at the U.S. Century Bank Arena for his introductory press conference April 15, one of the topics discussed were the terms of his five-year contract.

When Athletic Director Pete Garcia announced that the deal is worth approximately \$1.1 million, concerns that the former NBA All-Star's salary would be too expensive for the \$22 million budget were answered.

But when Thomas said he would be donating his first-year's salary worth to FIU, the Golden Panthers newest coach created a wave of bewilderment.

"I wanted to help this university," Thomas said. "I didn't want to be a financial burden."

Garcia said that when Thomas learned about layoffs and budget cuts, he told University President Modesto A. Maidique that the school would not have to compensate him in his first season.

Garcia also remarked that the Athletics Department, in light of recent budget cuts, received a \$5 million donation to upgrade the

arena from the Capital Improvement Trust Funds.

"I like rolling up my sleeves. I like taking some from the bottom and building it to the top. There's a lot of risk in that and there is also a lot of reward in that. But that's how I grew up," Thomas said. "I want to take FIU to the next level and I know it's going to take a lot of hard work, but I'm willing to pay the price to do that."

Garcia was hardly surprised by the gesture.

'GREAT HUMAN BEING'

"I know Isiah Thomas, and I guarantee you one thing. We are getting a great human being," Garcia said. "He has been an exceptional husband for over 20 years. A great father, a great son."

"I'll let him talk about basketball, that's his passion, but I will tell you one thing. Nobody will outwork this man."

On the basketball side, however, Thomas takes over a program that has not had a winning season since 1999-00. The Golden Panthers are coming off a 13-20 campaign and an early

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Players hope to learn from NBA Hall of Fame point guard

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

When Isiah Thomas, a Hall of Fame point guard, was announced as the head coach of the Golden Panthers' basketball team, point guards Josue Soto and Nick Taylor were ready to start learning.

"I'm going to pick his brain all the time," Taylor said. "He's one of the top point guards of all time. I'm going to ask him questions, try to get as much knowledge as I can."

Soto was the starting point guard last season and Taylor was his first backup. Thomas' resume impressed the point guard duo, who did not expect to have Thomas as their new coach.

"I was surprised, but I was also excited," Soto said. "Having somebody that has played at the highest level, makes you think, 'What can he do to make you better?'"

Thomas comes into FIU with no experience coaching at the college level. As an NBA coach,

he compiled a 187-223 during a five-year span. With the New York Knicks he went 56-108 before being fired in 2008.

Taylor hopes Thomas' national championship in 1981, NBA championship in 1990 and 13-year professional career will provide him with unique insight.

"Wow," that was my first reaction," Taylor said. "As a fellow point guard I think he's going to be able to show us his perspec-

POINT GUARDS, page 7



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

LOOKING FOR DIRECTION: Point guards Josue Soto and Nick Taylor (left, right respectively) both hope their new Hall of Fame point guard of a coach could help develop their skills.