Trading system to eliminate book costs

By LUISA CABRERA
Staff Writer

Beginning Dec. 27, students may never have to stand in line at the bookstore again.

A new online company, www.switchtextbooks.com, is launching a website which will allow students to exchange books through a network instead of buying them from a bookstore. The only thing students pay for is shipping and a $19.95 annual fee.

The idea began when Will DeSantis and co-founder Patrick Nagle were standing in line at a bookstore.

Like many students before them, DeSantis and Nagle were hesitant to receive little money for their expensive textbooks by selling them back to a bookstore. When they noticed the customer in front of them had the books they needed, and vice versa, they simply traded. The website blossomed from there.

Students can try the website for free. By filling out a profile and giving their email, they can be notified the moment a match is found for their book. They can look up the book they need by ISBN number, or by keyword. If a match is found, the students use their credits from previous trades to order their books.

Credits are gained and lost depending on whether a student sends or receives a book. No money is exchanged through the system.

Students can also receive a $5 credit for each friend they recruit to the website, which they receive as a check at the end of the month.

Books are graded on a seven-degree system, ranging from brand new to poor.

DeSantis and Nagle are working with the Baker and Taylor Corporation to ensure that the correct market value is given to each book.

“We’ve created a multi-year trading platform,” said DeSan
tis. “A trades with C, C trades with B and B trades with A. What that ensures is that we all trade to keep the cycle flowing. In essence, we are maximizing the value of your book.”

DeSantis and Nagle agree that textbooks have become unaffordable for students. They claim their website will elimi
nate the middle man.

“Too much money is being made through school stores,” said DeSantis. “What we’re trying to do is help students network and save them as much money as possible because tuition is going through the roof. We never want the stu
dents to feel like we’re taking anything from them. We’re setting up this system to make it as big as possible and to help students buy books from a bookstore. The website is being pro

oted at 4,000 colleges nationwide and will reach an estimated 9.13 million college students by 2006.

DeSantis and Nagle are also working on a system where teachers can post the books they will use in their classes.

“Basically,” said Nagle, “bookstores make too much money off [the student]. We know it’s like to sell a book back for $10 and then come back to the bookstore and see it on the shelf for 72 dollars. They are taking advantage of you.”

Needless to say, the bookstore is not taking the competi

tion lightly.

“I’m sure it will make us more competitive,” said Chris Quaintance, the University Park bookstore operations manager.

“But once [students] have exhausted other sources, they come home.”

Neither of the FIU Barnes and Noble bookstore managers seem too distraught about the website, claiming to know that private deals happen around them all the time.

“What most people don’t know,” said Quaintance, “is that 10 percent of our profit goes back to FIU. How much of their profit will you [the student] benefit from? I don’t think the bookstore will suffer that much. There is always hesitation when a student is asked to take a risk without any return.”

School of Hospitality upset over new curriculum

By MARK SCOPETTA
Staff Writer

Feelings have been running high at the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management since the FIU Faculty Senate approved a vote of 37-20, an undergraduate core curriculum – a set of 13 classes that all students must take in order to graduate, regardless of their major.

“A high percentage of our students are transfer students,” said Joseph West, the dean of Hospitality and Tourism Management. “Now, because of the UCC, a lot of those transfer stu
dents are looking [for their education] elsewhere.” He cited the University of Central Florida as an example, a school some students choose over FIU, because it doesn’t have a core curriculum.

During the meeting to decide the curriculum, the department of Arts and Sciences held 29 of the 57 votes and voted in favor of the UCC.

“Arts and Sciences voted as a block in favor of the UCC, because it stands to help them,” West said. In this new measure, all 13 of the UCC courses are Arts and Sciences classes. However, this statement was refuted by Bruce Hauptli, an Arts and Sciences senator at the time and the current head of the Faculty Senate.

“I do not specifically remember Arts and Sciences voting as a block in favor of the UCC,” he said.

Though the number of votes was recorded, the Faculty Senate did not keep a record of each senator’s vote.

According to the Faculty Senate website, UCC courses are important because they help students think critically, analytically and creatively to broaden their base of knowledge, so they will have a passion to assemble, assess, incorporate, and synthesize new knowledge and information.

However, the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management has always been opposed to the UCC.

“This school is losing out on the lucrative out-of-state student because of the UCC. Even if a student wishes to attend FIU, they often don’t want to spend the time or money on the extra courses,” West said.

Depending on transfer credits,
Students face more courses

From HOSPITALITY, page 2

From fall 2002, 665 students were enrolled in the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and according to reports, dropped to 650 in fall 2003 – a decrease of 2.2 percent. In 2002, the school taught 505 full-time equivalent credit hours. In 2003, that number shrank to 474 hours – a decrease of 6.1 percent. West believes that the decrease in the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management’s FTE was caused by the UCC. “Our head count is up,” West said, “but the credit hours we teach are down. Students are splitting their time between taking Hospitality and Management courses and fulfilling their core requirements. We’ve also had to reduce the number of required electives students take, so they can graduate in a timely manner.”

Although the school understands the purpose of the UCC, the outcome remains controversial. “We aren’t against a better education for our students,” said Joan Remington, the assistant dean of Hospitality and Tourism Management, “but this is a tough situation.”

Raul Moncarz, vice provost of the Biscayne Bay Campus, acknowledged the complaints the faculty might be having. “The University is in a budget crisis right now, and its priority is the education of the students. [The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management], however, makes a really valid point, and the administration needs to look into it,” he said.
**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

With finals around the corner, how high would you say your level of terror is?
- Low – I could sleep through them and still get As – no studying.
- Elevated – I’m concerned but not stressed – 6 hours of studying.
- High – I’ll lose sleep – 12 hours of studying.
- Severe – Death is the only way out – 20+ hours of studying.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

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**WINNER & LOSER**

**WINNER**

“Mr. Plastic Fantastic”: Californian Walter Cavanagh has entered the Guinness Book of World Records by owning 1,497 valid credit cards. Cavanagh’s obsession started in 1989, when he and a friend bet to see who could declare bankruptcy first.

**LOSER**

Pedestrians: In a recently released private study, Florida is the top state in pedestrian injury and death. In order to decrease this statistic, officials suggest those on foot fashion some sort of metal cocoon with wheels.

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**QUOTEABLES**

“Personally, I think I’m going to adopt a couple of 22-year-old rich kids that I hope will just sort of carry me into my retirement.”
- George Clooney, actor, when asked by Diane Sawyer about his thoughts on having a family.

“You are indeed a giant killer.”
- Alex Trebek, Jeopardy! host, to Nancy Zerg, after the real actress, on her pregnancy, just days before giving birth to twins Phinnaeus Walter and Hazel Patricia.

“My stomach is enormous and the bigger it gets the smaller my ass looks. So I’m kind of enjoying this.”
- Luciano Pavarotti, opera singer, best known as one of three tenors, announcing that he will retire after a 40-city tour.

“My stomach is enormous and the bigger it gets the smaller my ass looks. So I’m kind of enjoying this.”
- Julia Roberts, actress, on her pregnancy, just days before giving birth to twins Phinnaeus Walter and Hazel Patricia.

“Thank’s good. I definitely deserve that. I kid when I say that. But perhaps not so much kidding.”
- Donald Trump, mogul, on making GQ magazine’s Man of the Year list.

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**SEND US YOUR LETTERS**

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at the University Park campus, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beacon@fiu.edu. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. If brought in to an office, a legitimate ID may be accepted instead of a phone number. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 400 words.

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**OPINION**

**Alejandro Diaz Editor In Chief • John Levell Managing Editor • Alicia Bustamante Opinion Editor**

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**College sex standards fit Hollywood stereotype**

By LEONCISCO ALVAREZ Opinion Page Designer

College: Just because we are in it, do we really have to play into the Hollywood stereotype of being dirty, sex-craving teenagers?

The other day I was sitting at the Dorothy Chapman Plaza in front of the Graham Center at University Park, analyzing my surroundings, when a 20-something year-old frat boy sat down at the table next to mine. I automatically thought I was in the midst of a new WB production.

He was on his cell phone talking to one of his buddies about different sexual encounters he had that previous weekend. I was utterly disgusted by his words.

Later in the conversation, three of his friends at the table joined him in sharing their thoughts on how a specific girl was in bed. Apparently the four of them have a competition each week to see who can “score” the most. All that was missing was a noisy kid.

You would think students have better things to worry about other than sex. Is this all we are? Is this all we have become? Every movie that has depicted college life is certainly right.

I don’t mean to include those who don’t satisfy Hollywood’s recurring theme of drunken nights and numerous mindless sexual encounters, but this is something that hits us close to home.

According to the American Social Health Association, the total amount of people in the U.S. with an STD is over 65 million and counting. Fifteen million new cases are discovered every year, and two-thirds of all STDs occur in people 25 years of age or under. Since the average age of a college student is 21, I guess the dangers of promiscuity and STDs weren’t pounded into our minds enough during elementary, middle and high school.

I understand the fact that we are all young and supposedly living the best years of our lives, but that gratifying is it really to hop around from one dorm to another just for a couple minutes of enjoyment? How can we take such huge risks? Have all moral standards been completely lost? Are we so dense that we continue living our lives as if everything is OK?

The day will come when our generation will look back and be absolutely disgusted with the irrational decisions we made, and until that day comes, we must remain living in the shadow that Hollywood has cast upon us.

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Soca Bar celebrates Caribbean culture

By MARESA PATIENCE
Contributing Writer

Picture this: a moonlit night in a busy city. A cool river breeze cascading over to, create a natural canopy. Guests sit and sip cocktails in the sight, sounds and scents of the Caribbean, in stark contrast to the blaring city sounds of the surrounding Miami area.

On the second Saturday of every month, The Big Fish Restaurant on 55 S.W. Miami Ave creates a refreshing, unique blend of Caribbean music that can’t be heard anywhere else. Thanks to four friends from Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, music lovers can now enjoy Caribbean music in a diverse and unique environment. An environment that Jonathan Suite, Kevin Palmer, Troy Marshall and Damien Smart, created by blending their personal cultures into a Caribbean night for the masses.

The name Big Phat Fish came from the group’s love of soca, a type of music that is a blend of calypso and soul which was created in the West Indies. “[Big Phat Fish] came from a soca song by Marshall Montano, a Trinidadian artist,” Marshall said. Big Phat Fish’s logo was inspired by Mama Glo, a Trinidadian folklore character, who is considered a river goddess, she takes the shape of a half-human and half-fish or water snake and is usually seen sitting on a rock combing her long hair.

The logo for Big Phat Fish, an enchanting mermaid with long hair, is the image from the logo that Mama Glo often takes. Mama Glo is the preserver of the Caribbean’s friendliness, diversity and unity.

Her legend, according to Trinidadian writer, Shelley Marshall, is a tie that binds the scattered peoples of the Caribbean.

Big Phat Fish brings together those separate islands into one place, through soca, a friendly energy that provides a window into Caribbean culture.

At Big Phat Fish you experience a variety of music from all the Caribbean islands like reggae, dub, retro and hip-hop with an emphasis on soca.

It offers a first-class music experience and also aims to introduce other cultures to the sweetness of the Caribbean.

“Big Phat Fish has been successfully running for six months with an increasing interest by the Jamaican population in Miami. We are hoping to have a bigger turnout of American people,” Marshall said. The founders hope that Big Phat Fish will be the showcase for soca music from all over the Caribbean.

The next Big Phat Fish event will be held on the Dec. 11. “I hope Big Phat Fish will make soca known as the music of the Caribbean and someday break into the mainstream market as reggae has done,” co-founder Jonathan Suite said.

For information on Big Phat Fish visit www.bigphatfish.com.

Student film festival to keep cinematic culture alive

By ALLAN PICHARDO
Staff Writer

For those students with a cinematic flair, the FIU’s lack of an undergraduate film program may be a bit disconcerting. There was the alliance between the university and the Miami International Film Festival, but alas, it was too short-lived. Though artists in the visual arts, drama and music have outlets at FIU, student filmmakers have been left to fend for themselves in their search for exposure. For this invisible community, the Student Programming Council’s first student film festival, Through the Lens, is definitely a relief that is long overdue.

“This is the first year, but I hope it can establish itself as a tradition,” said Through the Lens coordinator, Krystal Alvarez. She has been planning this event since the start of the Fall semester. The event will be held at 7 p.m. on Jan. 12 at the University Park Graham Center Ballrooms. All students are welcome to submit their work. The deadline for submissions is Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. Those who wish to enter have to download an application from the forums at www.yourspc.com. According to Alvarez, all entries may be no longer than 18 minutes and may be submitted in DVD, VHS or VCD format to the SPC office in GC 341 at UP.

After the submissions deadline, a committee of SPC members will eliminate films with excessive gore, violence or otherwise distasteful content. The films that pass the filtering process will be screened at the festival. The top three films will be selected by a panel of judges consisting of two professors and SPC advisor, Manny Rosa. First place will win $250, second place receives, $180 and third place wins, $75. The winners will be announced the night of the festival.

“There is an art museum where students can show their art,” said Alvarez. “But there is nowhere where students can display their films.”

Through the festival, she hopes to keep the culture of cinematic artists at the university alive.

Students are encouraged to attend and support their fellow students. Through the Lens will be open to the public free of charge. Refreshments will be served.

To submit your film, go to the forums at www.yourspc.com.
Alexander the Not-So-Great

By AUTURO SANDE
Staff Writer

Alexander the Great never lost a war. By age 30, he had conquered the known world and extended his empire to the far reaches of the earth. But his greatness was just too hard to translate onto film.

In the film “Alexander,” Oliver Stone and Warner Brothers attempt this insurmountable task and, for the most part, fail greatly.

Almost all the elements of Alexander’s legend are there – the belief that he was the son of Zeus, his taming of Bucephalus, his great horse; his conquest of the Persian Empire; his entry into Babylon and his quest to leave his mark as the ruler of the greatest empire known to man.

The movie attempts to delve into Alexander’s soul to find out what made him such a powerful force. In some ways it is an attempt to mortalize an immortal, and therein lies its undoing.

The film shows Alexander trying to understand and respect every new culture and includes its positive aspects into his own strict Macedonian heritage. Although the movie portrays him as a demi-god, a leader, a conqueror, a lover (of both men and women), a tyrant, a drunk and a barbarian, the movie feels pretentious, self-indulgent and over-excessive. It is also boring and runs an hour too-long.

Alexander’s story is told in flashbacks by Ptolemy, one of Alexander’s generals, now an old man and ruler of Alexandria, but the flashbacks are an ill-conceived device. The movie suffers a great deal because of the confusing editing, mainly during battle scenes where the audience cannot really tell what is happening or which side is winning and why. It is as if Stone filmed Alexander’s entire life from birth-to-death, and unsure of what to use in his movie, just started cutting away frantically, overemphasizing, downplaying or simply omitting certain aspect of Alexander’s life. He neglects the use of coherence.

This is not to say that the film is not visually stunning. Yet Stone, who has always had a flair for the visual, seems more interested in the controversies surrounding Alexander’s life than in its actual facts. Did Olympus, Alexander’s mother, have Alexander’s father, Philip, murdered? Was Alexander himself murdered by his own men? These questions are not really answered in the end, but by that time you will not care.

Val Kilmer plays Philip and Angelina Jolie plays Olympias. Their acting is awkward and their mere physical presence is not enough to carry the movie.

Colin Farrell plays Alexander as a tortured soul, torn between the love he feels for his parents and the hate his parents feel for each other. Farrell always looks in pain, as if the price Alexander pays for greatness is a short life, filled with suffering.

With the success that “Braveheart” and “Gladiator,” two other sword-and-sandal epics, achieved at the box office and at the Academy awards, it is understandable why a studio wanted to make a grand adaptation of Alexander’s life. The result is a major misfire.
Up tempo play lifts women’s basketball

By ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

After dropping the championship game against West Virginia in the FIU/Herald Thanksgiving Classic, the women’s basketball team wanted to get back on the winning column against Fordham on Dec 1.

Led by Milena Tomova’s 20 points and 14 rebounds, the Golden Panthers defeated Fordham 61-52 at Pharmed Arena.

With this victory, FIU improved to a 3-2 on the season.

Early in the game, it was an up-and-down battle between the two teams. Fordham even matched every FIU attack and countered nicely by shooting mid-range shots.

Well-executed fast breaks and a successful transition game proved to make the difference that night.

Just eight minutes into the game, Fordham had committed five fouls and eventually went over the limit with 8:30 left in the first half.

The Golden Panthers outscored the Rams from the charity stripe 14 to seven and committed fewer than nine fouls.

Head coach Cindy Russo raved about her team’s ability to penetrate and get high percentage lay-ups.

“We played really well against a good team,” Russo said. “We played really hard and were able to utilize our biggest strength, which is the transition game.”

Transition surely was the word of the game as the FIU outscored Fordham fourteen to zero on fast breaks.

After a rollercoaster-like first half, the Golden Panthers started off the second half with an astonishing 12-2 run that opened the gap and paved way for their victory.

“Fordham seemed to be really tired after the first half,” Russo said. “I just told them to keep running the ball, and we would get our way.”

With the help of bench sparkplug LaQuetta Ferguson, point guard Faenza Bouderra ran up tempo game and had the Rams on their toes throughout the game.

“(Fordham University) got into foul trouble quickly, and I just wanted to penetrate the ball,” said Bouderra. “They put a lot of pressure on us, but we were able to grab rebounds and keep [the pace of the game] up.”

Going into the game, Bouderra was averaging just over six points, six rebounds and nearly seven assists per game.

Bouderra nearly doubled her scoring performance and did statistically better in the other categories as the 5’5 guard hosted a solid 12 points, eight assists and eight rebounds in the game.

Playing all 40 minutes proved to be no problem for Bouderra of Mulhouse, France, as she was able to play solid defense on speedy guard Monica Mack and distribute the ball well to her teammates.

After the game, Bouderra was proud of the way her team got back on the winning column.

“We out rebounded [Fordham University] and that was the key to the game,” said Bouderra. “I feel [as] if we ran the clock well and just played a much smarter game.”

Tomova recorded her second double-double in three games. The senior student liked the way FIU outplayed the Rams with an up tempo-style.

“We played very good defense against a tough team,” Tomova said. “We ran a lot of fast breaks and penetrated the ball very well.”

With four blocks on the day, Tomova passed Teresa Reker for fourth place on the all-time list with 102. She is now behind Albena Branzova (252), Cornisha Cotton (142), and Silvia Misa (107).

Coach Russo raved about her team’s ability to penetrate the ball, and distribute the ball well.

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At 8 points, the player from Latvia scored six points in the first two minutes of the second half.

This victory was a much-needed one for FIU, as the team will face a tough University of Miami squad on Dec. 9 at Pharmed Arena. The game can be heard live on the radio on WRGP 88.1 FM.

Ft. Lauderdale with April and October start dates.

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**THE YOUNG:** Since his high school days, Lebron James has constantly been compared to Michael Jordan. Wealthy Nike contract, #23 on jersey and a winning mentality, are among the many comparisons between the two.

Kellen Winslow Sr. Offensive lineman Robert Gallery, has been compared to the great and former St. Louis Ram, Orlando Pace. The list goes on. Similarly, the NBA’s 2003 draft was deeper than just King James. Carmelo Anthony was every bit as impressive in his rookie season for the Denver Nuggets, and Dwayne Wade proved the Lebron vs. Melo argument deserved a third candidate.

Time will tell if these players will continue to shine and be great. In professional sports, nothing is assured. Injuries and bad decisions can end a player’s development before they reach their peak potential, but like the superstars who began their careers in the 1983 NFL and 1984 NBA drafts, today’s young stars can shape the face of sports with their image in the next decade.

**THE OLD:** Michael Jordan has been named one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history. Jordan is one of a limited number of players who have won an NBA title and a Gold Medal in Olympic play.

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The 1983 NFL and 1984 NBA draft classes are often remembered as two classes that shaped their respective sport. Many current and future Hall of Fame players emerged from each class. Now, 20 years later, both professional leagues are witnessing a class that looks as solid as those of ‘83 and ‘84.

Every now and then a draft class enters the NFL or NBA with an abundance of talent to compete for pro ranks in consecutive years. But while the 2003 NBA and 2004 NFL drafts still have a lot to prove, they look to be the most comparable to those of 20 years ago.

Not since then has the NFL or NBA had a draft with so much hype before producing such pleasing results. The five MVP awards and ten scoring titles. The 1983 NFL draft and the 1984 NBA draft launched stars like Jerry Rice, Michael Jordan, and Pervis Ellison. This year, the NFL unleashed Ben Roethlisberger, Eli Manning, and Mario Manningham. These players are expected to be the face of the NFL for the next 10 years.

The 1983 NFL draft was witness to the coming of age of most NFL Hall of Fame players like Dan Marino, Terry Bradshaw, Terry Longino, and Randy White.

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Last season’s NBA draft launched the careers of Lebron James, Dwyane Wade, Carmelo Anthony, Darko Milicic and Chris Bosh. These players are expected to be the face of the NBA for the next 10 years.

This year, the NFL unleashed Ben Roethlisberger, Eli Manning, Sean Taylor, Larry Fitzgerald and Kellen Winslow Jr., to name a few. At the head of their respective classes are James and Roethlisberger. Sure, it’s too early to tell if either will develop into a superstar, but both are off to a spectacular start and resemble two of the greatest players in professional sports.

The 1983 NFL draft, for example, introduced John Elway, Dan Marino, Jim Kelly, Erick Dickerson, Darrel Green and several other Hall of Fame players who rewrote the record books and changed the face of football through the mid-90s.

Only a year later, the 1984 NBA draft saw the emergence of some of the greatest players in professional sports, including Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, and Moses Malone.

Even though it’s too early to tell, Roethlisberger has proved he’s a starting quarterback in the NFL. The rookie quarterback is called the best pure passer in football since Dan Marino, who was drafted by the Miami Dolphins in 1983.

Roethlisberger shattered NCAA passing records at Miami, Ohio and has yet to suffer a professional loss. He replaced Tommy Maddox as the Steelers starting quarterback in game two of the 2004 season and produced 10 consecutive wins, making Pittsburgh fans forget former Steelers quarterback Terry Bradshaw, for the first time since his retirement.

We’ll see if Roethlisberger, Manning and Phillip Rivers will be mentioned in the same sentence as Marino, Elway, and Kelly.

However, what makes these drafts so spectacular is that there is a group, are deeper than a single potential superstar. Apart from the quarterbacks, other 2004 draftees are slated as being among the best in the last 20 years.