SGA’s Cram Jam alleviates stress of final exams week

By KATHERINE BEALE
Staff Writer

It’s finals time again, and around campus students are starting to pull out their textbooks in anticipation of exam week.

In the residence halls there are fewer parties and more study sessions as the semester draws to a close.

The Campus Life directors are doing their part to aid students in the pre-finals crunch.

At University Park, computer lab hours at the Graham Center will be extended from Dec. 10 – 18.

The first floor of the Green Library will be opened for 24-hours Dec. 13 and 14 for Cram Jam, a pre-exam session lasting from 11:45 p.m. – 1:30 a.m. There will be free food at the Fresh Food Company, courtesy of SGA. Students will be able to enjoy massages, music and blue books. Admission is free with FIU identification.

During Cram Jam, students will be able to purchase a replacement Panther Card for $5, a steep discount on the regular $13.49 price.

Some students are extremely enthusiastic about the event.

“Students get stressed out [with finals],” said Diana Garayar, a freshman majoring in international business. “[The events] will help students relax more and everyone loves free food.”

At the Biscayne Bay Campus, Campus Life will have fun activities for students in the Wolfe University Center during Release Week which started Dec. 6 and ends Dec. 9.

On Dec. 6, students enjoyed free massages and stress management tips from Abundant Health Services, a mobile company run by FIU sports medicine alumna Shawnee Wells.

According to Kevin Hall, Editor-In-Residence and head of the Journalism Writing Program, students need a change of pace.

“Yes, it gives me an opportunity to release tension, which I wouldn’t have done if these events hadn’t been organized,” she said.

Release Week happens every semester at BBC, and Valdelamar is impressed with where the $4,000 budget goes.

On Dec. 3, students received an e-mail from Patricia B. Rose, professor and associate dean of the SJMC, stating that journalism students may register for next semester’s courses that require a grammar exam score, regardless of whether or not they have the score needed to enter. These students must have already completed Writing Strategies and must sign an acknowledgement statement. If the student does not achieve the required score for the corresponding class by Feb. 15, 2005, they will automatically be dropped from the course.

According to Rose, this arrangement was made in response to the numerous complaints the department has received from students who have experienced problems with the study materials on the grammar test webpage, www.thewordsociety.com, SJMC students access regularly in order to use the grammar book, practice quizzes and practice tests provided.

“At the school we really are concerned when students are upset. We really do pay serious attention to the problems,” Rose said. “After speaking with many students and a lot of faculty, we tried to figure out what we could realistically do that would be fair to everyone.”

SGMC students not only complained to the department via e-mail and in person, but also circulated a petition in order to let the department know their concerns.

The department received the petition on Nov. 30, which was signed by more than 100 students.

“I’m really happy, and we are all very grateful,” said Marniyan Hernandez, majoring in broadcast journalism. “I think the solution is fair, and we all hope the website will be fixed soon.”

One problem with the Word Association webpage was the slow upload of quizzes and exams. Another was that, on occasion, after a student would access a quiz and answered some of the questions, the quiz would simply stop working. When this happens, the student must begin the quiz again or try to access the webpage later.

Students say that, because of this, they are not able to prepare for the exam and, therefore, are not able to obtain the required scores.

According to Kevin Hall, Editor-In-Residence and head of the Journalism Writing Program (the grammar exam), students aren’t studying the grammar book enough and are scoring the ten-question quizzes by the thousands.

Hall also states that the problems with the Ward Association webpage are due to the excessive amount of practice tests and quizzes taken and the limited database potential.

“The problems are occurring because students don’t want to study,” Hall said. “The right way to study is to read the grammar book and then see the problems are occurring because students don’t want to study,” Hall said. "The right way to study is to read the grammar book and then see
OTHER UNIVERSITIES have been approved. More than 11,000 amendments have been offered; 27 states. Since the Constitution was ratified, more than 38 states. Citizenship. Three of the measures were introduced to amend the Constitution to permit foreign-born citizens to become president. That they are joining a growing movement to allow foreign-born citizens to become president.

In a Gallup poll conducted last month, 31 percent of respondents, mostly because of the scoring requirements and the $15 fee for each exam. It is not very popular among many SJMC students, mostly because of the $15 fee for each exam. Mary Zamba, advertising major.

Other students are not only upset that a fee is charged for each exam, but also by the exam score requirements for the journalism classes, which many feel are too high and difficult to achieve. "I understand that it is necessary for a journalist to have a clear understanding of grammar, but the school should not impose a test with such a high score," said senior journalism student Carolina Sarassa. "It is sad that many students cannot graduate or move on to other classes because of this test." Hall admits that the exam is not easy but believes that its level of difficulty is parallel to the grammar knowledge students need in their professional careers. "Here we have a reasonable grammar test, not too extreme, but it is no baby test," Hall said. "This is a system that really allows the student to learn. The result of it is that our students are being sought after all over the nation, and it’s largely to do with the fact that we believe, the only journalism school in the country that attempts to teach language skills to its students.

Some students believe that the exam doesn’t prove anything. "I don’t feel the exam will help students in their professional careers," said advertising major Gino Campodonico. "I feel like you’re more obligated to memorize strategies on how to pass the test than actually retaining the information in your head." The administration, on the other hand, feels they cannot emphasize the importance of the grammar exam enough.

Especially in the communications field, good writing is paramount to getting a job, so that if you don’t have writing skills, it will be very hard," Rose said. "What we are trying to do is prepare students for the workforce. According to Rose, the $15 fee is necessary in order to keep the grammar exam and the entire system running.

"The $15 fee is used for the programming and for the software. Also, it is used to maintain the computers in the labs, update the computers, pay for the program that it is difficult to determine when the problems with the webpage will be fixed.

“The recent problem with the webpage is a programming problem. We need to totally reprogram it,” she said. “The programming is costing a fortune right now. We’re reprogramming the system the whole time, and I cannot give a date as to when the problem will be resolved.”
Dysfunctional Family Holiday

By ALCIA BUSTAMANTE
Opinion Editor

With the semester finally winding down, it’s time for many college students to traditionally go home for the holidays. For some, this is a comforting time when they get to relax and reconnect with their families.

Others, however, go to college to get away from their crazy families and find it more appealing to reconnect with an electrical outlet. I fall into this second category.

If you’re anything like me, you’ve become accustomed to the bickering, the fights and the occasional “mishap” with the electric turkey carver, but after being around same people for so long, it may be difficult to cope after being thrown back to the wolves.

Granted though, you have probably dated at least three people (of various genders), changed your major twice, and have experienced both mental and spiritual growth while in college. Yet, once you walk through the door of your family’s house, you’re still 12 years old and experience the same sights and smells.

Your mother still greets you with, “Wow, you’ve gained weight.” Your father is still nowhere to be found (along with the Jack Daniels). Your cousins are still bringing each other over who will get to play Nintendo next.

And of course, Mima is still wandering the backyard, talking to an imaginary neighbor she had in Cuba – 50 years ago.

Making it through the day will be tough, but following a plan will assuage, if not prevent the massive psychological scars that are yet to come.

SMALL TALK

So you grab yourself some eggnog (two or three cups if it’s alcoholic), and make your way to the couch. You see your aunt and uncle. Deploy the pleasantries. Tell them how you are without actually divulging any information.

This way, nothing of value will get back to your parents. Remember, the key phrase of any family gathering is “trust no one.” If anything, keep a 24-hour news source on the TV.

You’ll remember to talk about current events, and the more will fill the awkward silence when your aunt asks you why you didn’t go to an Ivy League school like your sister did.

YOU SHOULDN’T HAVE

Now that you’ve spent two months of work-study salary on gifts for ungrateful jackals, it’s time to see what glorious I-don’t-know-you-at-all gifts you receive. Keep a poker face. Accept all gifts graciously, even the thighmaster from your mother and the Best of Hall and Oates CD from your father. If they even sense dissatisfaction, it will give them ammunition for the ritual post-dinner fight.

PASS THE POTATOES

Dinner is served – finally, a time where you aren’t forced to communicate. Take a little bit of everything, even if it tastes like an old boot. This way, “Why didn’t you have any of the casseroles?” doesn’t turn into your weeping mother locking herself in the bathroom, screaming, “No one appreciates me! There’s no reason to live!”

PROPS TO THE ELDERLY

Once the evening has wound down and your family is boozed up, you know it’s time to depart. Say goodbye to everyone and be sure to hug your grandparents. While they are inexcusably responsible for your mess of a family, they are also the ones who have survived it the longest, making them admirable if not eligible for sainthood.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

It is inevitable that at some point, the focus will be on you, and your self-esteem will be torn apart by at least two if not all of your family members. Have an emergency plan. When things get rough, drop some juicy information about a sibling, and then sneak out the bathroom window.

The fact that your brother impreg- nated someone will certainly trump the topic of your failing grade – whether or not this is true is inconsequential.

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

Total participants: 72
Cost your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com
Kanye West, Usher, Alicia Keys lead Grammy nominations

By JIM ABBOTT
The Orlando Sentinel

New faces of R&B and one of the genre’s legends are among the leading nominees for top honors at the 47th Annual Grammy Awards.

Innovative rapper Kanye West led the field with 10 nods, followed by R&B singer and MTV sex symbol Usher and soulful singer Alicia Keys with eight each. American icon Ray Charles took seven nominations for his posthumously released “Genius Loves Company.”

Usher was expected to lead the nominations announced Tuesday in Los Angeles, so it was surprising to some industry insiders that West managed to slip by him. Usher’s “Confessions” has sold more than 7 million copies, roughly three times as many as West’s “The College Dropout.”

“The biggest surprise is Kanye getting more nods than Usher,” said Chuck Taylor, managing editor for Billboard Radio Monitor. “That may be a battle cry for rappers to come up with something different than the violence, crime, money and misogyny that has been carrying that genre for years. He made a more thoughtful album, and critics and the public are reacting to that.”

“College Dropout” will vie for best album against the Charles all-star duet album “Genius Loves Company,” Green Day’s “American Idiot,” Keys’ “The Diary Of Alicia Keys” and Usher’s “Confessions.”

Usher, Charles and Green Day also surfaced on the record of the year list. Usher for his collaboration with Ludacris and Lil Jon on “Yeah!”; Charles for his duet with Norah Jones on “Here We Go Again” and Green Day for “American Idiot.”

Rounding out that category was “Let’s Get It Started” by The Black Eyed Peas and “Heaven” by Texas-based alt-country group Los Lonely Boys. The group also was nominated for best new artist.

In other categories, Wilson’s “Here for the Party” is nominated for best country album against Usher, though. “Conversations in Dance” by Tift Merritt’s “Tambourine,” Keith Urban’s “Be Here” and Loretta Lynn’s “Van Lear Rose.”

As many as West’s “The College Dropout” is nominated for best song category, an award for songwriters, were “Daughters” (John Mayer); “If I Ain’t Got You” (Alicia Keys); “Jesus Walks” (C. Smith and Kanye West); “Live Like You Were Dying” (Tim Nichols and Craig Wiseman); and Hoobastank’s “The Reason” (Daniel Estrin and Douglas Robb).

In other categories, Wilson’s “Here for the Party” is nominated for best country album against Tim McGraw’s “Live Like You Were Dying,” Tift Merritt’s “Tambourine,” Keith Urban’s “Be Here” and Loretta Lynn’s “Van Lear Rose.”

The latter, produced by White Snipes member Jack White, garnered five nominations for the longtime country star.

Still, Wilson’s recognition for “Redneck Woman” is more significant, says Billboard’s Taylor.

“It brought women back to forefront in country radio, and they have been missing for a long time,” he says. “Plus, it’s a great song, something really relatable to people, and it’s always nice when the Grammys recognize that.”

Winners will be announced in a live televised ceremony Feb. 13 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles (8 p.m. EST, CBS).

This year’s list of nominees is a diverse yet predictable group that shows the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences sticking to a familiar pattern. The academy has always had a weakness for top-selling stars and well-established icons, the latter often honored long after defining moments or even death.

There also were occasional oddities, such as Elvis Costello’s darkly country “The Delivery Man” showing up on the rock album list.

Charles, a 12-time Grammy winner who died in June at age 73, looks to be a strong sentimental favorite. A win also would dovetail nicely with the expected Oscar nomination of Jamie Foxx for his starring role in the hit biopic “Ray.”

Beach Boy Brian Wilson also was nominated in the pop vocal album category for “Smile,” the retroed version of his long-unreleased 1966 masterpiece.

Despite his influential work with the Beach Boys, Wilson and that band were ignored until a belated lifetime achievement award in 2001. A win this year for the brilliant “Smile” would be a make-good for that snub.

Billboard’s Taylor says the field is balanced enough that a Norah Jones-style sweep for one of the top nominees might be unlikely. He wouldn’t bet against Usher, though.

“I think Usher’s going to have a great year at the Grammys and I think he should,” Taylor says. “He had the best-selling album of 2004 for a reason. He’s had a phenomenal year – and he’s talented.”

Grammys shammmys: The Beacon’s top indie albums of 2004

No.1
Air, Talkie Walkie
Astralwerks

No.2
Modest Mouse, Good News for People Who Love Bad News, Epic

No.3
The Walkmen, Boys + Arrows, Record Collection

No.4
Deerhoof, Milkman, Kill Rock Stars

No.5
Sonic Youth, Sonic Nurse, Geffen
Kendall coffee house: an inexpensive place to dine

A bite with Carlos

Joffrey’s Coffee and Restaurant – 11531 N. Kendall Dr.

BY CARLOS OLAECHEA

Staff Writer

Coffee houses don’t usually serve food, much less good food, so I was surprised when friends recommended Joffrey’s. The Coffee and Restaurant as an elegant and inexpensive place to dine.

Located in Kendall, at the former location of the ill-fated Cheeburger Cheeban (I guess pricey 1 lb. burgers no longer appealed to diners), Joffrey’s tends to be lively on Friday and Saturday nights when college students frequent it, many of whom attend FIU through an evening of fun and food with some of the pioneers of hip hop. Performers include: Slick Rick, Doug E. Fresh, KRS-One, Big Daddy Kane, Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick are among the performers. Performers include: Slick Rick, Doug E. Fresh, KRS-One, Big Daddy Kane, Rakim Kool, G. Rap, J.T. Money, M.C. Lyte: Uncle Lick, Queen Latifah, 2 Live Crew and LL Cool J will also appear. Doors open at 4 p.m. Advance tickets are $25. For more information contact Ticketmaster at 305-358-5885 or visit ticketmaster.com.

Mark yr calendar

THURSDAY • DECEMBER 9

Sexual harassment knows no boundaries. The Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention program raises awareness of both legal and psychological dimensions of sexually harassing behavior. It is sponsored by the Division of Human Resources and will take place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the MARC Pavilion at UP. For additional information contact odl@fiu.edu.

FRIDAY • DECEMBER 10

It will be a night of fireworks, parades and blowing horns and reggae when Vicea A Fox hosts the 78th annual Arabian Nights Festival going down Dec. 10 and 11th at the Opa-Locka Airport, located at 14301 NW LeJeune Rd. Avant, Carl Thomas, Stephanie Mills, Dem Franchise Boyz, Wronkzize, Sugar Hill Gang, Big Daddy Kane, Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick are among the performers. Festival tickets for both days are $25, and single day passes are $20. For tickets and more information, visit www.accessconsultingservices.com or ticketmaster.com.

It’s Movie Day at the Biscayne Bay Campus! The Student Programming Council will present National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation from 2-5 p.m at WUC in room 155. So, relax, sit back and take a break.

SATURDAY • DECEMBER 11

SATURDAY • DECEMBER 12

Miami’s Throwback Tour 2004 will take place at the Bayside Hut, 3501 Rickenbacker Causeway, in Key Biscayne. Starting at 4 p.m., spend an evening of fun and food with some of the pioneers of hip hop. Performers include: Slick Rick, Doug E. Fresh, KRS-One, Big Daddy Kane, Rakim Kool, G. Rap, J.T. Money and M.C. Lyte: Uncle Lick, Queen Latifah, 2 Live Crew and LL Cool J will also appear. Doors open at 6 p.m. Advance tickets are $25. For more information contact Ticketmaster at 305-358-5885 or visit ticketmaster.com.

Back in time

December 7, 1991

U2’s Achtung Baby debuts at number one on Billboard’s pop albums chart. One year later, the album won a Grammy Award for Best Rock Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal. - Allmusic.com
FAU football still a step ahead of FIU

Middle Tennessee University in the season opener, their first win against a I-A opponent—something FIU has yet to do.

FAU also won a lot of close games, which shows the growth of the program and the confidence the team has built.

Having head coach Howard Schnellenberger roaming the sideline helps too. The experience he has with building a winning college program is second to none.

That doesn’t just mean recruiting players and teaching them how to play, it’s also about scheduling. Take a look at the third year schedules of FAU and FIU on the chart on page eight.

FIU had less margin for error. The talent level was higher. FIU had to play cleaner in order to win, but they just couldn’t do it.

Eventually, it led to a snowball effect where the confidence to win wasn’t there, much like in 2003. Then, dumb mistakes sealed the deal.

To be fair, the Owls didn’t have to deal with the mess Miami’s move to the ACC made until their third season was over. But they were ready to make that move by then, and they had real reasons to believe they could compete in I-A.

Their 9-3 record this season is proof of that. FIU simply wasn’t ready, as its 3-7 record proved.

It reacted to a changing environment, but didn’t realize that it hadn’t evolved enough to handle that new environment.

To paraphrase an old saying: You can’t unspill the milk. So what does FIU do now? There’s only one thing that can be done: Win games. A lot of games.

With a senior-heavy squad next season, it might be FIU’s best chance in a while to prove that they can be a success both on the field and in the stands.

But with a full I-A schedule next season, including Texas Tech and Kansas State, forgive me if I can’t see a team that has yet to beat a I-A team, be successful against a schedule full of them.

As a current student and soon-to-be alumnus, I hope I’m wrong. I hope I’m made to look like a complete and utter fool.

But I don’t think I will be.
SPORTS

Tough schedule ahead for basketball

By ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA
Staff Writer

As everyone on campus prepares for finals and the holiday break that follows, the FIU men’s basketball team has nothing but tough games on its mind.

In just under a month of play, the Golden Panthers will take to the court eight times in what should be one of the toughest stretches of the season.

Following the game against Florida Tech at Pharmed Arena on Dec. 9, the Golden Panthers will travel to Tallahassee to face Florida State University. Afterward, the team is off to Tampa two days later for another state matchup against South Florida University. Two days before Christmas, FIU will return home to face George Washington University, one of the hottest teams in the country.

First-year head coach Sergio Rouco, along with the rest of the Golden Panther team, knows what they are up against and is taking each game one step at a time.

“We are trying to play the best competition we can before [the start of] conference play,” coach Rouco.

The Colonials are coming off a season where the team proved they deserve to be a legitimate top-25 team and one that can contend for a spot in the Final Four come March.

George Washington won the BB&T classic for the third time in school history, following consecutive upsets of top-25 teams, No. 11 Michigan State and No. 12 Maryland.

FIU and George Washington have met twice in the previous two seasons. The Colonials won in Miami during the 2002-2003 season and showed their dominance again last year in Washington D.C., beating the Golden Panthers, 76-67.

This will be the toughest game the Golden Panthers play over the eight-game Christmas break, and Rouco has his mind set on what must be done.

“We will be good for me to get away from the players and for them to get away from me,” he said.

On Jan. 6, exactly one year after the two teams last met, the Golden Panthers face Arkansas-Little Rock in a game where the Golden Panthers look to avenge a 12-point loss from last season.

Revenge may seem to be the motivation when FIU plays any conference game this year, since the team only managed one win in 14 games last season. The team will also face Arkansas State University two days after Arkansas-Little Rock.

The Golden Panthers haven’t defeated either team since the 1999-2000 season, when they won back-to-back games on the road in a similar road trip. That was also the last season FIU had a winning record, finishing the year 16-14, 9-7 in the conference.

However, for the team to be successful, the play of some of their stars must rise.

“Raphael daSilva has to pick it up some, and Junior [Matias] has to play a little more consistent,” explained Rouco.

“We also need to get more output from our freshmen.”

When it comes to overall team play, the coach knows what needs to be done.

“[We have to work on the rotation] Five guys that start and few coming off the bench that all eye in on what we are trying to teach them,” said Rouco.

All in all, the upcoming eight games should be a tough test for the young squad. If the Golden Panthers can finish with a winning or .500 record, it will be an interesting team come conference time.

STEP IT UP!: Coach Sergio Rouco wants players like Raphael daSilva (above) to step up their game come conference time. The team will play top Florida schools in December and will begin conference play in January.

GEOFF ANDERSON/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

The Beacon wishes all faculty and students a happy and safe holiday season.

There are several positions available at The Beacon.

Stop by GC 210 or WUC 124 and apply to begin training for the Spring 2005 semester.
Owls win Shula Bowl

By ANDRES CORDERO
Staff Writer

FIU football closed its third year of intercollegiate play with a loss at Pro Player Stadium in the third annual Don Shula Bowl, on Dec. 7.

Senior quarterback, Jared Allen, closed his NCAA career with 311 yards and two touchdowns, both to Roosevelt Byrnes, as the Fighting Owls downed the Golden Panthers, 17-10.

With a 17-3 deficit in the fourth quarter, the Panthers rallied late to a 15-play, 84-yard drive that culminated in a Chandler Williams 5-yard touchdown reception from Josh Padrick, trimming the Owls’ lead to 17-10.

However, good play from Tiger Clark’s defense and a little help from an illegal procedure penalty meant that FAU had to settle for a 24-yard field goal attempt that Mark Meyers sent bouncing off the right upright—no good. Meyers made up for the miss by hitting from 32 yards out on FAU’s next possession, giving the Owls a 2-0 advantage.

With 1:20 left in the first half and the Panthers at their own 37-yard line, Padrick connected to Williams. With 10 seconds left in the first half, FIU was forced to settle for the equalizer as Adam Moss’s 25-yard field goal split the uprights.

FIU’s: A 4-6 record in their third season, which by comparison is almost a mirror image of FAU.

FIU has fallen to Florida Atlantic University, and that has prompted a popular question: What the hell is going on? Why have the Owls managed to look so dominant when the Golden Panthers have managed, at best, to produce a great Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde impersonation?

When the Golden Panthers could not defeat the cross-town rivals for their third consecutive year, the Golden Panthers could not defeat the cross-town rivals.

FIU has produced a great Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde impersonation. This FIU team didn’t have that kind of season. But why?

FIU’s first two seasons are almost a mirror image of FAU’s. A 4-6 record in their inaugural season, followed by a 2-9 season where the level of competition rose and saw the Owls blow a lot of games. FAU went 5-6 and 2-10, respectively.

But FAU stayed in I-AA their third season, which meant staying with roughly the same kind of schedule that they had the previous season. And that year was the year they broke out big too. The Owls pulled out a lucky last-second win against at a mostly empty and off-campus Pro Player Stadium in its first year.

But it gave the Owls an extra year of I-AA football, and saw FAU go 11-3 in 2003 before falling a game short of the national championship game.

Even more impressive was the way FAU reacted after their first two losses - a 45-17 spanking in the home opener against Division II Valdosta State (one they should have won) and a 22-29 loss against I-A Central Florida.

The Owls rolled off 10 straight victories, six of which they won by 10 points or fewer, including one against FIU.

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