Hackers invade UTS system

By GIOVANI BENITEZ
InDepth Editor

As the university launches a new campaign to filter viruses in FIU e-mail, it faces a new “critical” challenge—one that originated from a potential hacker attack involving some 165 computers on campus, University Technology Services announced last week.

“Programs were placed on the systems and a scan was done. It doesn’t mean that anything was necessarily taken from the system. I’m more concerned about identity theft,” said John P. McGowan, chief information officer and vice president of information technology.

The program allegedly retrieved usernames and passwords for FIU administrators, UTS representatives and others in the university community. However, the financial system was not compromised, McGowan said.

This isn’t the first time FIU has dealt with hackers. In June 2002, keystroke tracking software was found on the computers in one of the Green Library’s student labs.

The program was designed to record everything a student typed on the computers, including credit card numbers used when placing online orders. Ultimately, the FBI linked the hacker attack with members of the Russian mafia and an arrest was made.

Nearly three years later, the university still deals with similar situations, but FIU is not alone.

“They’re not just probing our network, they’re probing many networks, and when they find weaknesses in systems, they then start to utilize programs that are capable of a brute-force examination of those systems to see if they can compromise them,” McGowan said.

The Privacy Rights Clearinghouse in San Diego tracked a series of hacker attacks since February on university computer systems across the country.

The University of California at Berkeley, Tufts University, Boston College and Carnegie Mellon University are just a few on the list. Just last weekend, hackers broke into the Georgia Southern University online store, but much like in FIU’s case, there is no evidence that financial information was ever stolen.

Kia Makki, Lucent Technology professor at FIU’s Telecommunications and Information Technology Institute, said that cyber security awareness is key in a world where privacy is an increasingly valued commodity.

“Maybe the university has to offer some short training courses, [much] like they offer short training courses for PantherSoft. People need to know what the issues are and what they need to look for. You have to be able to carefully protect yourself,” said Makki, who is currently planning an international workshop on mobile and wireless security in Miami for March 2006.

Meanwhile, McGowan insists that the university, as well as federal agencies, are still investigating the latest security breach, but suggests that students, faculty and staff should routinely shut down their computers in an effort to prevent future hacker attacks.

Most recently, the university implemented a new anti-virus and anti-spam system for all FIU e-mail accounts. The program will identify e-mail messages considered to be of highest risk. A UTS field team will also visit several university offices to make sure all computers are virus-free and secure.

Senior leaves mark in student affairs

By ANA SANCHEZ
News Editor

Onika Williams enjoys doing the ordinary things most college students do—listening to Kanye West, eating sushi at her dorm with friends and sleeping whenever she gets a chance. However, she is not your typical college graduate.

Not only did she take 21 credits this semester and work part time at the Office of Admissions, but she also maintained a 3.99 grade point average along with four scholarships.

Four years ago, Williams became the Salutatorian of her senior class at Home- stead Senior High School and was accepted to eight universities, including the University of Florida, Virginia Tech, Spelman and Florida State. So, why did Williams decide to attend FIU? Her reason was simple.

“Out of all the schools that I was accepted to, FIU was the one that didn’t treat me like a number. They really cared whether I came here or not,” Williams said.

After winning the Martin Luther King essay contest, Williams got recruited by Provost Mark B. Rosenberg her senior year to come to FIU.

He spoke to Williams and her mother about what FIU had to offer and gave them a tour of FIU while William’s mother told Rosenberg how well her daughter was doing in school. Four years later, Williams will be the first generation college graduate in her family that includes seven siblings.

“My parents support me 100 percent and I want to make them proud,” said Williams on her accomplishment of receiving a degree.

Over 90 percent of students who attend Homestead Sr. High are minorities, and English is not their first language, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to standardized tests. Students are not even aware of the procedure needed in order to attend a university.

“We weren’t even told about taking the SATs or ACT. We would see more recruits from the military at our school than colleges coming to visit us, so students don’t even take the tests,” said Williams.

Williams is one of the few Homestead graduates who came to FIU and she hopes to be an example to those students. If she did it, she knows many could do the same.

“I come from the same place that you come from and if I can do it, you can do it too,” she said.

Throughout her college years, Williams had a unique experience of Rosenberg
Steel, cement price slow construction

By KAREN BUTIRAGO
Contributing Writer

Buried utilities and infrastructure problems are being blamed for the delay of Biscayne Bay Campus apartments. The new cafeteria and dining facility is scheduled to open in the summer of 2006. FIU has spent more than $4 million toward the construction of a new dining facility and fitness center at the Wolfson University Center.

According to Nick DiCiacco, executive director for business and finance, the funds for the construction are coming from the Capital Improvement Trust Fund (CITF), which consists of payments made to the state from universities resulting from student fees. "On the CITF, the University gets what was contributed plus interest on a 3-4 year cycle," DiCiacco said.

The funds for the construction are also coming from a loan, which are the profits of vendor enterprise. This includes bookstore and food service, which means that students contribute financially to the construction. The initial budget did not include the rising prices of steel and cement.

"[Prices] continue to escalate because of demand," DiCiacco said. The planning for the construction took approximately six years.

However, actual construction started two weeks ago. Vice Provost Paul Moncarz insisted that these delays are normal in construction.

"I know it’s bother-some for the students, but we have to be positive," Moncarz said. Moncarz added that BBC has encountered construction problems, und expected costs, not only with the new cafeteria, but also with the fitness center and the health center.

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But Moncarz insisted that the cafeteria opens Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. The cafeteria closes at 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, the University schedules events that keep the cafeteria open an hour earlier than the one at BBC.

"When we get to [the UP cafeteria] at 6:45 a.m., and the only thing we have to eat is [the] fried egg, the student gets something to eat," said fresh man Dagmar Ocasio. "[At BBC] the cafeteria opens at 8 a.m. and the only things you can eat are sushi, a Jamaican patty or a burrito."

Ocasio mentioned that the scheduling is an inconvenience for the evening students because the cafeteria closes at 6 p.m. Moncarz said that there is not enough demand from the esti mate 7,500 students and the 10,000 staff members at BBC to introduce new things to the menu.

At UP, there’s triple that population, which consequently creates demand for variety.

Moncarz added that the administration is working hard to make sure the cafeteria opens in a timely manner.

"I hope it could open tomorrow," Moncarz said.
Student encourages campus involvement

WILLIAMS, from page 1

always checking her grades to see if she was doing well in school. “Not everybody gets to say that the provost of a major university knows your name and family,” Williams said.

Getting involved in school came natural to Williams, who belonged to many honors societies and was an active member of the Delta Sigma Pieta sorority. She also interned at Disney World where she did her thesis for the Honors College. In Orlando, she saw her idol, Kanye West, perform at Disney’s House of Blues.

Last year, she attended Alternative Spring Break with the International Business Honor Society in Bangkok, Thailand, where she found a love for sushi and a passion for helping abused women. “I find Onika to be a caring, sensitive and intelligent individual, which is why I think she was a perfect fit for the work she was doing in Bangkok,” said Malcolm Vivian, graduate assistant and civic engagement coordinator.

In Bangkok, Williams and her peers worked alongside the association to promote the status of women. They focused on the care of abused women and those who carried the HIV virus. They are currently working on a project in which these women can sell their embroidery in the United States.

Williams will continue to oversee civic involvement through the Japanese Exchange Teaching (JET) Program. For a year, she will be teaching English to children in Japan.

“Oneika is a very endearing individual, who doesn’t take challenges and going to places that normal people would not dare to go. She’s about to leave for the JET Program and we are really excited for [her],” said Tannrece Cribbs-Lorrant, graduate advisor of Greek Affairs.

What inspired Williams in the JET Program was the International Business Honor Society Program and the Japanese I and II classes she took at FIU. On May 3, she will walk in the commencement ceremony and graduate with a bachelors degree in Business Administration and a minor in Asian Studies. Williams would like to continue her studies and go on to law school.

Reflecting on her FIU experience, Williams fondly remembers meeting Black Panther activist Angela Davis when she came to speak at the university. “Never in my wildest dreams I thought I would meet Angela Davis. I went up to her, she signed my book and had my picture taken. She is somebody I really look up to,” Williams said.

Williams encourages students to get involved in school as much as they can.

Her message to students is to change what they don’t like and to take advantage of the opportunities at FIU.

“Don’t just take your classes and leave. Get involved because when something happens that you don’t like, you can’t complain because you weren’t there to do anything about it. Use your voice and opportunities given at FIU,” she said.

The soon to be FIU alumna thinks that students should not take FIU for granted. “Just because the school is within your reach and it’s in your city, that doesn’t mean it’s something you have to settle for. FIU is a premier university and I think people get caught up in the idea of having to go away for school that they overlook opportunities that they have right here. Just because it’s not six or eight hours away doesn’t mean it is not good enough,” Williams said.

Ceremony planning stage over for students, faculty

By ANA SANCHEZ

News Editor

After years of academic studies, 3,200 FIU students are expected to hear their names read at graduation ceremonies held from May 3 to May 4 at the PHC Alumni Park.

For the past couple of weeks, the Office of the Registrar has seen long lines of seniors working on final details of the application process toward commencement and waiting to receive the tickets for family and friends attending the ceremony.

A week before the ceremony, the Office of the Registrar serviced 960 students who were waiting for tickets.

The application process for the ceremony includes filling out the commencement confirmation form and getting approval of completion of credits by advisors.

Graduation Supervisor Gisela C. Cabrera stresses the importance of applying for the graduation ceremony at the right time. “Being important as commencement is, it is more important to apply for the correct semester in which the student is going to complete all necessary courses in order to earn their degree,” Cabrera said.

Students are advised to start applying the semester before they finish all the requirements to graduate and not in the middle of their last semester, which ultimately slows down the process of approval.

It is important that students understand the importance of taking the right classes to graduate, and receiving degree until all their requirements are met.

Although Tania Vazquez, who is majoring in psychology, applied mid-semester, the application process went smoothly.

“While standing in line to get tickets for the ceremony, Vazquez recounted her commencement preparations.

“I went to my advisor to check for my credits, then I just filled the application. I have one class remaining that I plan to take in the summer,” Vazquez said.

Brian Brown, who is majoring in health science, had a similarly rapid experience.

“I started my graduation application at the beginning of this semester. My advisor did all for me. My requirements had already been done and it was quick and easy,” Brown said.

Although some students will walk at the commencement ceremony, they will not officially graduate and receive their diploma if they have not completed all of their requirements and registered for the summer semester to complete missing credits.

Students graduating this semester will not receive their diploma at commencement. Diplomas will not be distributed until 10 to 14 weeks after grades become available.

It will be a year of firsts for FIU as the College of Law will graduate its inaugural class of approximately 52 students. Provisionally approved by the American Bar Association, the College of Law will hold its commencement ceremony May 22 at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center.

During the ceremonies, prominent alumni will receive Distinguished Alumna Service medallions for their contributions to the community and to FIU.

Amongst those alumni are broadcast executive Michael Rodriguez, vice president and general manager of Telemedio 51/WSCV, Thomas M. Cornish, CEO of Setlin, the largest independent insurance company in South Florida and Frank J. Bolanos, chairman of the Miami-Dade County School Board.

The College of Arts and Sciences commencement ceremony has the largest number of graduates this year—about 1,005 students. During this ceremony, a posthumous degree will be given to the parents of Robert James Smiddy.

Smiddy passed away on Sept. 18, 2004 of a bleeding complication from a viral disease. He had earned 170 credits for his degree in biological sciences. The Robert J. Smiddy Memorial Award will be presented to a distinguished student from the department of Biological Sciences.

After the commencement ceremonies a reception will follow for the alumni honored with the Distinguished Service medallions.
We've all grown up somewhere. When you really think about it, where did you grow up?

Where did you experience the worst. I mean, look at me, buying brochures from three years past. It happened to me in stages and in flashes. I talked to my roommate in Wal-Mart and inquired out loud, "Do you think I should get the sponge mop or the rag mop?" Suddenly, she looked up from the toilet wands and said, "What'd you say?" And I thought, "When did we get so boring?"

I felt tremendously accomplished in my room and study for the last three weeks of the semester, to make up class work. I learned that even across the stage, I'll know I've accomplished a lot, but also, that I've accomplished very little. As I shake someone's hand, I'll look over at my mom, who just finished nursing school, and know that life isn't a hierarchy of the educated and the uneducated because true learning isn't about textbooks, final papers or raising your hand in class.

True learning is about love. It's about unconditional love from family and friends and strangers on the street. And what of my grand plans? My plan is to give that love to everyone. It's about unconditional love for yourself and that independence is a reality for many of my childhood friends.

I learned that even across the miles, some friendships will never be broken. Most of all, I learned that college isn't everything. My blue graduation gown is hanging on my closet door, and I've put the stole and other regalia around the collar. I still need to buy the right shoes.

This Monday, when I walk across the stage, I'll know I've accomplished a lot, but also, that I've accomplished very little. As I shake someone's hand, I'll look over at my mom, who just finished nursing school, and know that life isn't a hierarchy of the educated and the uneducated because true learning isn’t about textbooks, final papers or raising your hand in class.

True learning is about love. It’s about unconditional love from family and friends and strangers on the street. And what of my grand plans? My plan is to give that love to everyone, and still leave a good bit for myself.
I can't believe that my time at FIU has come and gone. It seems like it was only yesterday that I first came here to pursue my bachelor's degree in public relations in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Biscayne Bay Campus. In reality, it was back in the fall of 1991. After two years at FIU and feeling that I was going nowhere, I decided to leave for the Bay Campus.

In a few words, we have our own little “melting pot” in the corner of the campus. Since this is my last semester at FIU, I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have in some way or another enhanced my experience here and made it possible for me to soon be a college graduate.

Of course, I’d like to thank my family and close friends. Even though they do not always understand why I do the things I do, they have enough confidence in me to understand that there is always a method to my madness. Thank you to my former teacher, Mrs. Cynthia Pelaez: without her help I could not be writing these words as she taught me the English language when I first arrived in the U.S. from my homeland, Caracas, Venezuela in 1979. Robert D. Strickland, through not my teacher directly, was instrumental in my surviving what was a very difficult time in my school life– my high school years.

I am lucky enough to be able to say that although many years have passed, I am still in contact with these two most influential people in my life and am able to enjoy and share a very special and close friendship with each of them. Please accept my apologies if I do.

Most importantly, thanks to Dawn R. Newman. Without her constant support, guidance and friendship, this long experience would not have gone as smoothly as it did. She is truly instrumental to the success of many of the students in the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

To Professors Carier, Del Risco and Cole: thank you for your support, friendship, guidance and knowledge you have passed on to me. Professors Martinez and Moll, your enthusiasm is admirable! I truly enjoyed being in your class.

I thank all other professors that I have had in class or have known while on this journey. Finally, to my classmates: I thank you for welcoming me with open arms, treating me like a friend and keeping me young even though there is easily a 10 to 15 year age difference between most of you and me.

There are so many people to thank here at FIU that I hope I don’t miss anyone. If I may leave you with a word of advice, as I have been where many of you are headed once you complete your degree here at FIU: Whatever you do, do it with pride, do it because you love it, do it because there is a fire inside of you that you can’t put out and you feel it is the right thing to do in your heart.

Do it because it will enrich your body and faculty that come from anywhere in the world you can imagine.

We have people from the islands of the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and even Africa and China. In a few words, we have our own little “melting pot” in the corner of the campus.

The Dempeshoument of the writing program of FIU’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication is a tragedy for every student of that school, (See SJMC Professor resigns after 20 years, April 21 issue).

That program was 20 years in the making. When I was asked in 1983 by the then FIU provost to help straighten out what was a tiny, unaccredited department– he called it “my single biggest academic headache”– I consulted with the leadership of journalism, advertising, public relations and television in South Florida to help determine the direction the school should take.

Without fail, one of the questions every one of them asked me was the same: What are you going to do to make sure your new program will be a success? I would write them a huge problem then and remain one today.

But we decided that the buck would stop at SJMC. If applicants didn’t know the fundamentals of the language– especially grammar– we did not admit them until they met SJMC standards. Once admitted, they were taught that making continuing progress in our writing program during their two years was expected. And contrary to popular wisdom, these demanding standards did not result in lower enrollments. Far from it.

The school grew by leaps and bounds, attracting better and better students which in turn led us to hire an incredible array of professors. The principal architect of the program was the departing Professor Kevin Hall.

What he developed soon won high praise from top journalists from around the country. Every one of the three accreditation teams to ever visit SJMC in its first years, 1991-1992, said the writing program was “one of the best in the country”– always pointing out how SJMC had achieved these high standards in a very short period of time.

But that is not all that’s falling apart at SJMC. With the departure of a key voice in the program during their two years with us and contrary to popular wisdom, these demanding standards did not result in lower enrollments. Far from it.

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Most kids jump from one activity to another for years before they settle on something they enjoy. They take ballet classes, join baseball teams or even take a stab at reading for enjoyment. Some children will continue their hobby for a couple of years before losing interest, but for the lucky ones, that little hobby becomes a genuine passion.

Zoila Araica was one of the lucky ones. She was nine years old when she began playing the clarinet. She didn't expect to continue with the instrument or even music, but because she noticed that playing the clarinet came natural to her, she decided to give it a try.

"I started practicing and it came really easily to me. After that, I skipped levels so I really liked it. It was really satisfying," Araica said.

She continued to excel in music over the years and her hard work paid off. At the age of 15, she was elected drum major of her high school's marching band.

According to Araica, being drum major is no easy task; one has to run rehearsals, conduct field shows and discipline band members who are out of line – no matter how much older and more physically imposing they are than you.

"I was barely 15 and I was having to boss around 18-year-old guys. One time I called the band to attention and they responded except for this one guy. I told him to drop and do push-ups and he told me f--- you. Of course, when you're 15 you want to cry and go into a hole. But no, I just stepped off the ladder, told someone else to run rehearsal and I took him off to the side. I told him f--- you in an educated way," Araica said.

Experiences like that one helped shape and prepare her for the even bigger challenges she faced while being the FIU Golden Panther Band's drum major for the four years she has attended FIU.

She not only benefited from the experience of prior incidents, but also from having Gregory Martin, marching band and symphony band director at FIU, around to help guide and educate her more than anyone else could.

"He helped me so much and I have no words for that," said Araica.

Araica graduates this spring with a bachelor's in music, but said she will be returning for her master's in conducting.

"I got stuck with a bachelor's in music with a concentration in education, and that really bothered me because I did as much work as any other person getting a bachelor's in education.

Even though she is graduating, she is not done with school. She plans on returning to get her master's in conducting.

Although many people enjoy music, they do not see it as a legitimate career – the way Araica does.

"It is not respected among society, music or music education. It's belittled instead of being put on a pedestal," she said.

Because of this view of music, jobs in this field are few and underpaid considering the amount of work a music educator has to do.

Although financial stability is something Araica wants in the future, the low pay has not deterred her from going into her chosen field. She hopes to one day teach an elementary school class and pass on the gift of music she received as a child.

"If you are a part of an ensemble, you get this connection that you don’t see but you feel in some way," Araica said. "If you are conducting it’s even better because you get the full spectrum of all the tone colors and you are helping to create a mold out of that moment."

For being only 21 years old, Araica has accomplished more than most people her age. Over a period of five years, she has led two different ensembles as drum major; one of the most challenging and time-consuming jobs anyone can hold.

She has stepped up to the people who did not respect her, and in turn gained the respect of everyone.

She has accepted the fact that because she wants to make a career out of what she loves, she won't receive the recognition or the salary she truly deserves.

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Because of conflicts between the College of Education and the School of Music, she was unable to graduate with a bachelor's in music education. "I got stuck with a bachelor's in music with a concentration in education, and that really bothered me because I did as much work as any other person getting a bachelor's in education.

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Beating the Odds

Senior optimistic after criminal past

By JULIA MARCHES
Staff Writer

From the confines of a jail cell, graduating from FIU was the furthest thing from Jason Bravo’s mind. Arrested for felony charges while attending Christopher Columbus High School, Bravo, 24, overcame obstacles and will graduate from FIU this spring.

Looks can be deceiving for Bravo. Once an inmate and an associate of gang members, his tattoos no longer describe his personality. “They reflect the stages of my life and my family,” Bravo said.

“Getting an education opens your eyes and helps you find your place in the world,” he added. “I used to have distorted views. This is why I make the bed for my family, and now I am about to start law school.”

Bravo’s grandfather, who he credits as being the main influence of his family while going to school, moved to Miami from Cuba in 1962. “When I first got here, he was washing dishes. Today he owns a state-wide company, South Florida Express, which employs over 200 people, including myself,” Bravo said.

During his time at FIU, Bravo’s main goal was just to finish school. “I oversee that the transportation of documents and checks are taken care of for over 200 branches of Sun Trust Bank in Sarasota, Tampa and Brooksville,” Bravo said.

He looks forward to moving to Tallahassee with his wife, Heidi, and son, in order to start FSU law school in the upcoming fall semester. “My son is my reason for doing this,” Bravo said.

Bravo believes in giving back to the community. “Children are one-third of our population and all of our future. From time to time, I speak to inmates at the jail I was locked up in. I talk to them about how I once sat where they sit and slept where they slept, and now I am about to start law school.”

From time to time, I speak to inmates at the jail I was locked up in. I talk to them about how I once sat where they sit and slept where they slept, and now I am about to start law school, Bravo said. “The experience makes me feel good, it’s gratifying.”

Bravo describes himself as passionate, and knows he will graduate with a law degree. “When I believe in something, I do it.”

He has high hopes of one day becoming a law firm with his younger brother, Paul, who is currently attending Georgetown University Law School.

Through his life experiences and complications, he leaves FIU students with a word of advice. “Take school seriously. It is ultimately to your benefit and there are rewards at the end of the struggle.”

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ODDS

1. GOOD CONVERSATION
   What good is anything if you can’t have a meaningful chat about it? The key to happiness and success is to be able to have a conversation in which all parties involved find significant value in what is said.

2. DAVE MATTHEWS BAND
   Label me as one of their loyal followers. DMB’s music is life. If you’re a fan, you know what I’m talking about. If you aren’t, you just wouldn’t understand. They’re coming to town this summer July 16-17. Yes, I will be at both shows.

3. COLLEGE BASKETBALL
   It’s refreshing to watch a game where young men play their hearts out for the sake of winning and pride – and not for a paycheck. I’ll take a Princeton back door cut, a Syracuse 2-3 zone and a Kentucky Run ‘n Jump over the one-on-one basketball played in the NBA.

4. RED WINE
   It’s dark, complex and robust with hints of vanilla and blackberry. A must-have with a barely cooked 14 oz. piece of meat from your favorite steakhouse. Not only will red wine get you buzzed, but it’s good for your heart as well!

5. TEXAS HOLD’EM POKER
   Difficult to explain, but easy to play. The perfect game for a graduating member of the SGA! I’m just kidding ... seriously.

LIFE!05-02-05.tif
Pit being sealed off due to fire purposes.

Q: What policies or ideas from the former administration do you want to change?

The difference between this administration and the last is that I’m going to be holding people a little more accountable to their positions.

I also want to create certain positions based on my platform to reach out to students that haven’t been heard from before – such as multi-cultural students to faith-based organizations, and making sure those get heard. That’s going to be the major difference: helping out groups that haven’t really been heard before while still addressing everything else that is supposed to be addressed.

Q: What policies from the Rosario administration do you plan to continue or keep the same?

He started the Tech Committee, which worked closely with [the University Technology Services offices] to establish a new anti-spam program that’s going to be installed in the Webmail.

We’re also looking for a new type of web service that’s faster, quicker and more user-friendly. Those plans were very successful and I want to continue those types of projects. The Panthercard expansion is almost done as well. We’re just pushing for the completion very soon.

I never liked how a lot of administrations came in and started their own agendas.

I want to finish what he did. Some of my platform plans were based on what I could get done from the last administration.

Q: What were your thoughts on your opponent, Aurelio “P.J.” Rivera?

My opponent is a great leader. At the SGA banquet, I mentioned him. I don’t have to tell him to continue serving FIU because I know he will. I think he’s a great asset to FIU. I don’t know what he plans to do in the future – I haven’t spoken to him yet – but whatever he plans to do I wish him the best. I know he’ll continue to do whatever’s best for FIU students, whether he does it for SGA or through anything else he gets involved with. He just hasn’t talked too much with me.

Q: Do you think your affiliation with the Pikes helped in the campaign?

No. Other than them supporting me, I don’t think it helped or hurt at all. It was just my brothers that came out and helped me out.

I’ve heard that a lot of people who were in other fraternities, other sororities or who were not even affiliated with the Greeks who believed in the platform, also helped me out.

Q: Do you think a Greek presence will influence your administration?

For the past eight to ten years, I believe every SGA president has been Greek, so I don’t think it’s a big deal. I’m an FIU student first, and there’s nothing wrong with being an FIU student.

Q: What do you think is the best way for graduating students to keep in contact with the university?

I think our Alumni Association is great. They’ve been making great strides in staying communicated with our alumni, helping many come to our athletic events and just reminding them where they came from.

A university’s prestige is based on their alumni base and all the other “traditional” universities, such as [the University of Florida] and [Florida State University] are great because of alumni coming back after establishing themselves and donating money and supporting athletic events. I think it’s just important to hold FIU at great lengths because that’s where they get their degrees and if they have those degrees they’ll be more important in the end.
FIU must address student concerns

MESSOD, from page 12

those saw FIU finish two games away from the College World Series. Some see FIU’s recent struggles as a sign that it’s time for new management. But I have a feeling FIU is due to break it big and soon.

TOTAL FIU OVERHAUL

FIU is slowly changing from a commuter school to a traditional college. There’s nothing wrong with that, but there is something wrong with the university regularly piss off students. FIU must do a better job with addressing the concerns of those who pay their salaries. For people to want to be here, they have to like being here, and I don’t think FIU does enough to make that happen.

Customer service sucks. Parking is always horrendous, as are the parking tickets. Construction never ends. Classes are being cut. Fees are being increased. Campus life is a joke. Guess what that means when people graduate? They don’t give money to the school. And they don’t give a rat’s booty about this place because they have lots of loyalty or gratitude when people think they’ve been milked.

That’s a big reason why FIU gets horrible alumni support and why they can’t draw decent crowds to events. You have to get people to go for the love of their school and there’s little of that at FIU.

I have lots of love for this place and I wouldn’t have chosen to go anywhere else, but I bet that I’m in the very small minority. Administrators have to make student and alumni satisfaction a high priority in the future or risk their plans going belly-up.

SPECIAL THANKS

FIU has been a blast. I’ve had way too much work, play, travel and fun. I wouldn’t change most of it. There are lots of people to thank, but I must mention Robert Jaros, Orlando Machado, Will Sanchez and Rich Kelch because each of them was instrumental in my development at FIU.

I will forever be grateful to WRGP because without it, I probably wouldn’t graduate.

The Beacon – specifically Harry Coleman and Xavier Villamarzo – gets its props for giving me a chance to get decent clips.

Thanks to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication for having great professors, for changing the stupid grammar test and for giving me cool classmates.

But most of all, thanks to those of you who’ve read my articles and listened to me on the air. Extra special thanks go out to those of you who actually think I’m good. Here’s hoping some media company with money to spend is one of them.

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Farewell graduating athletes

This is a team-by-team list of all the active student-athletes graduating in Spring of 2005.

**BASEBALL**
- Leo Calderon, majoring in health information management.
- Dennis Diaz, majoring in physical education.
- Denny Hernandez, majoring in criminal justice.

**MEN’S BASKETBALL**
- Warren Gale, majoring in sports management.
- Junior Matias, majoring in liberal studies.

**WOMEN’S BASKETBALL**
- Deniz Boz, majoring in business management information systems.
- Milena Tomova, majoring in finance.

**MEN’S TRACK & FIELD**
- Darwin Mesadieu, majoring in international relations with a minor in marketing.

**WOMEN’S TRACK AND FIELD**
- Alexia Dean, majoring in health management.
- Linda Louissant, majoring in construction management.
- Doursiel Moore, majoring in criminal justice.
- Venisha Williams, majoring in education.

**FOOTBALL**
- Doug Jones, majoring in business.
- Harold Leath, majoring in business.
- Dannon Monroe, majoring in accounting.
- Greg Moss, majoring in physical education.
- Rashid Smith, majoring in sports management.
- Kevin Timothie, majoring in broadcasting.

**WOMEN’S GOLF**
- Laura Viveros, majoring in international business.

**WOMEN’S SOCCER**
- Charissa Gingerich, majoring in exercise physiology.

**SOFTBALL**
- Amanda Nealer, majoring in travel and tourism.

**SWIMMING**
- Tiffany Haynes, majoring in elementary education.

### Reduced Fare College Bus Pass

Broward County Transit (BCT) has a new 31-Day Reduced Fare College Bus Pass for only $16.00*. THAT’S HALF THE COST OF THE REGULAR 31-DAY BUS PASS – A 50% SAVINGS!

**THE REDUCED FARE COLLEGE BUS PASS:**
- can be used for 31 consecutive days
- is a magnetic swipe card for easy use
- can be used to get to school, libraries, the beach, malls, movies, and more
- is for students attending Broward Community College (BCC), Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Florida International University (FIU) and Nova Southeastern University (NSU) ONLY
- requires current student identification card at time of purchase

**SOLD AT THE FOLLOWING BROWARD COUNTY LIBRARY LOCATIONS:**
- Main Library 100 S. Andrews Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale
- North Regional Library 1100 Coconut Creek Blvd., Coconut Creek
- South Regional Library 7300 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines
- Southwest Regional Library 16835 Sheridan Street, Pembroke Pines

954-357-8400
www.broward.org/bct and click on “College Bus Pass”

*Reduced Fare College Bus Pass is a pilot program that ends December 31, 2005.
FIU football player signs NFL contract

By NIKOLAY OREKHOV
Assistant Sports Editor

Three seasons after inauguration, the FIU football program has developed its first NFL talent. On April 25, defensive back Kevin Timothee became the first player in FIU’s brief football history to sign an NFL contract. Timothee graduated from Plantation High School in 2000. He initially attended Ole Miss and transferred to FIU after his one is more of a gut feeling, or maybe just bias creeping up on me. There’s not a lot of recent history that says FIU will get there. They haven’t done well in Sun Belt games. But I do have one fact backing my prediction. It’s not the first time Danny Price has gone through this. After FIU had their first post-season team for the last two years. The time is coming for FIU to re-invent itself, and I think it will happen without Russo and Nissen.

BASEBALL GOES TO OMAHA

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FOOTBALL IN DEEP TROUBLE

There are major questions to answer regarding student leadership, game management and preparation. The 2005 schedule makes last year’s look like a game of patty-cake, and FIU finished 3-7 in 2004. I can’t see them any better in 2005. FIU is trying to pull a “Mission Impossible” that would make Tom Cruise wince. They’re trying to succeed in college football at a school with little tradition and poor fan support. If they don’t do it this year, I don’t think patience will last much longer, especially with Florida Atlantic doing well. Without wins, blue-chip recruits won’t take FIU seriously – and neither will anyone else. You’re going to need more than Method Man and Redman to get people to come out.

Make no bones about it, head coach Don Strock, Athletic Director Rick Mello and a lot of other people’s jobs are on the line in 2005.

BASKETBALL GETS A ROLE REVERSAL

Call Sergio Russo a miracle worker: He turned a bad team into a mediocre one. Thirteen wins in one season is impressive, considering what he inherited. Imagine what can happen when a young and decently talented pipeline is established. FIU will be a power in the Sun Belt, and they will win the league’s automatic bid to March Madness at least once in the next five seasons.

I don’t see similar things happening for the women’s team. Cindy Russo is expected to retire after her 30th year at FIU, which is three years away. The European pipeline, built by Inge Nissen, has brought great players, but that was before bigger-name schools recruited Europeans. Now, FIU hasn’t danced since 2001-02 and they have not been a post-season team for the last two years. The time is coming for FIU to re-invent itself, and I think it will happen without Russo and Nissen.

A few thoughts on the future of FIU athletics

BY MESSOD BENDAYAN
Staff Writer

I, and about 5,000 others, will be part of the graduation ceremonies during the next two days. The transition from student to alumnus has begun and it’s a lot scarier than I thought it would be.

But before I put on my graduation cap, I will put on a turban and dust off a crystal ball. For my final article, I will make four predictions about FIU Athletics in the near future. Wear a seat belt; it’s going to be a bumpy ride.

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BASEBALL GOES TO OMAHA

This one is more of a gut feeling, or maybe just bias creeping up on me. There’s not a lot of recent history that says FIU will get there. They haven’t done well in Sun Belt play and they’ll probably have to go through a tough Florida bracket to get a chance. That’s assuming they even get to the post-season – something they haven’t done since 2002.

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SPORTS