College of Law accredited in record time

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Staff Writer

FIU’s College of Law, a program which has
been around for only four years, received full
accreditation Dec. 1, the quickest accreditation
granted in recent history.

“This was the fastest time possible in which
we could achieve accreditation under the
American Bar Association’s rules,” University
President Modesto A. Maidique said in
a press release. “This accomplishment is a
testament to the quality of the administration,
faculty and students of our College of Law.”

The morning of the announcement was
tense one for the college’s administrative
staff.

Dean Leonard Strickman, associate deans
Ediberto Román and Michelle Mason, Maid-
ieque and Madelyn Downs, program assistant
and law professor, appeared before the Council
of the Section on Legal Education and Admis-
sion to the Bar of the A.B.A. They were subject
to a series of questions.

A half hour after their appearance, Strick-
man was informed that the College of Law
was approved for full accreditation by a 24-
member panel consisting of state supreme
court justices, practicing attorneys and law
school deans and professors from around the
nation.

“Today was a great moment and a bit of a
‘phew’ factor for me. This is the first milestone of many great achievements
that FIU will make in the near future.”

The program started in 2002 and
received provisional accreditation, one of
the necessary steps needed to full accredi-
tation, in 2004. In order to be fully accredited, a col-
lege’s graduates are qualified to take the
bar exam and practice law, including those
who graduated before the accreditation was
granted.

Today was a great moment and a bit of a ‘phew’ factor for me. This is the first milestone of many great achievements that FIU will make in the near future.

Cuban reporters published abroad

NAHIBO GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Jorge Dalmau has learned to
outwit the Cuban government. Yet,
Dalmau is not a spy or a U.S. official
—he is an editor for FIU’s Interna-
tional Media Center.

In his position, Dalmau edits
over 150 articles a month written by
independent journalists in Cuba. As
many as 214 Cuban journalists have
participated in the program; Profes-
sional Support for Cuba’s Indepen-
dent Journalists.

Because of obstacles imposed by
Cuba’s communist government,
International Media Center and
Cuban journalists employed unique
tactics to surpass what Dalmau calls
“a basic problem of communica-
tion.”

“The Internet can only send e-mails
within Cuba, it is tightly controlled,”
Dalmau said. “The only way is to go
to a hotel, ease your way in, dress and
appear to be a foreigner, and then pay $5
an hour for dial-up service — which is
asking you to spend half of your monthly
salary.”

E-mail communication is seldom
used, so program coordinators and par-
ticipants also use mail correspondence to
exchange articles, educational materials
and feedback.

John Virtue, director of the center,
explained a complicated routing process
used in the early stages of the program.

“If I have friends in Canada send
mail to Cuba, but if back in Cuba they
pick up on this and other
shortcomings in the program, and
expanded them into an article called,
“Cuba thwarts U.S. efforts to help
dissidents.” According to the article,
FIU’s program has “fallen short of its
mark” in its efforts to train indepen-
dent journalists in Cuba.

The catch is that FIU has received
$1.6 million from the U.S. Agency
for International Development to
train independent journalists in the
island since 1999.

Now that the program is accredited, all
the college’s graduates are qualified to take the
bar exam and practice law, including those
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The Miami Herald picked up on this and other
shortcomings in the program, and
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The Miami
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picked up on this and other
correspondence sent by journalists may
have been intercepted, resulting in
potential participants never hearing
back from the center.

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USAID is a federal agency whose
SGA Notes

President (Alfonso “Alfi e” Leon):
- The Beacon Editor in Chief C. Joel Marino spoke about the paper’s role with SGA
- Trustee meetings Dec. 4-5. Dec. 4 issues: 8:30, Finance and audit, 11:30 Student affairs, 2:00 Admin and athletics. Dec 5 issues: 9:00 Medical school, China campus, athletics/coaches
- Vice President (Providence Okoye):
  - Intramural field will continue construction, despite some controversy with lighting.
- Comptroller’s (Nancy Cadijar):
  - Readership survey – Goal: 500 responses by Dec. 4, 1000 by end of semester.
- Judicial Board (Kathryn Cubbon):
  - Write opinions for situations that might arise. “[For example] if someone drinks at a game and hits a person. While that’s not something we deal with, we need to have policies in place in case someone comes to us with that. We need to decide how to deal with that as a council.”
- Homecoming (Alex Ravelo):
  - Looking at budget to see what we have left - need to fix the Roary Ballon

New Business (aye-nay-abstain):
- Fax opinion A06-31: FIU Wind Ensemble instrument rentals passed for $1000 (11-0-0)
- Council Bill B06-10: Amendment to the bylaws regarding the Finance Committee passed (10-0-1).
  - Finance Committee responsible for all allocations of the Finance Committee budget, must tell House of all appropriations, even if denied
- Council Bill B06-11: Amendment to the FIU SGC-UP Finance Policy was tabled (9-0-2).
- Representatives can override Finance Committee with 2/3 majority.

Announcements:
- Good luck on finals.

- Compiled by Angelina Troff, Beacon Staff

Virtue: Reporters not students

CUBA, page 1

budget is appropriated by Congress, and FIU is among few universities to receive funding from the entity.

According to The Miami Herald article, a sign of FIU’s International Media Center’s failure was that of its 214 participants, only four actually “completed the required courses.”

The center disappears. In an unpublished letter to the editor, Virtue showed his discontent with the article’s depiction of the program.

“As a journalist whose specialty is ethics, I was disappointed to read the references to [FIU’s] training of Cuban independent journalists,” Virtue wrote.

According to Virtue, it was “made abundantly clear” to the writer, Oscar Corral, that the program did not have a set number of required courses.

Virtue also presented the author’s treatment of the participants as students throughout the piece.

“I didn’t like Corral using the word ‘students.’ They are mid-level career professionals, journalists, some of them in their sixties,” Virtue said. “And they have learned everything they know about journalism from us.”

Most journalists participating in the program have never seen a real newspaper but as a result of the training, editing and facilitation provided by the center, many have had their works published in newspapers around Latin America, including El Universal de Caracas and Bogota’s El Tiempo.


Others were not so successful. In 2003, 24 participants were imprisoned in a Cuban crackdown on dissidents. Of the remaining participants, 40 are in exile, and about 100 are active with the center, filing articles regularly.

Over time, the center has learned from its failures and successes. Today, fax machines have stabilized communication between writers and reporters, and Virtue is only able to visit the island once per week to deliver his workshop, the program now employs video conferencing and has strengthened its collaboration with the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

“It’s been a challenge, for us and for them — their very existence is illegal and no one’s ever done this before,” Danbarg said. “But given our circumstances, we’ve been very adaptive and very successful.”

Virtue agreed.

“For 18 years we have trained over 8,000 journalists throughout Latin America. We were there when Democracy returned to Panama and when the Sandinistas left Nicaragua,” Virtue said.

“We’re preparing the independent journalists of Cuba for the day when there is freedom of press.”
Beginning Spring 2007, the University Park Apartments will be set to have the look and feel of a gated community due to the addition of the gates that are being constructed at both entrances into the complex, one located on 107th Avenue and the other located opposite the Health and Life Science Building.

The decision to construct the gates was made primarily because of the Department of Housing and Residential Life decided that they wanted the apartments secured during the summer months when the complex is closed, according to Jim Wassenaar, executive director of Student Affairs Operations.

Basically, we have determined that during the summer months, when the apartments are closed, the committee will be able to create a barrier to ensure that environment from vehicular traffic,” Wassenaar said.

According to Wassenaar, gate’s construction would cost the University roughly $30,000. During the winter break, a hedge will be added 107th Avenue portion of the fence. With landscape included, the fence project is estimated to cost the University around $45,000.

“Students brought to us concerns that they didn’t like the fact that students had to walk a barrier between the main road and the apartments,” said Wassenaar.

The entire project is expected to be completed during the winter break.

Although senior Sam Enos didn’t care much about the gates at first, he admitted that if the purpose of the gates was to keep students safe and regulate external traffic, then it was a good decision.

“I’m graduating at the end of the year, so the addition of the gates that are going to affect me. If it keeps the residents at the apartments safe, then it’s cool with me,” Enos said. “If it’s to regulate traffic, then that’s cool, too.”

Even though the gates will be installed and operational for Spring 2007 semester, they will remain open at all times and only will be closed during the Summer semester when the apartments are closed.

“The gate that we are putting up is actually very limited in its function,” Wassenaar said. “It was built in an open position during the Spring 2007 semester and students won’t be facing those gates when they try to get into the complex.”

Students like junior Rosanna Martinez, although happy at first with the addition of the gate, believing they would give students comfort and security, changed her opinion once she learned that the gates will remain open 24 hours a day during the Fall and Spring semesters.

“Being a resident of the apartments, I definitely thought that the gate would make the apartments a much safer place to live in, but now that I know that they’ll be open to the public, I think it’s pointless and a waste of money,” Martinez said. “But at least it makes the apartments look much better than it used to.”

When the idea of the gates was brought up by Housing and Residential Life did look over the possibility of closing the gates but decided against it because student involvement was a bit too much for it, according to Wassenaar.

Additionally, the closed gates could create lines of cars at the 107th Ave. entrance to the apartments.

“We have some of the infrastructure to do a more sophisticated system but, really, from an operational standpoint, we decided to do it and the concept is not going to be taken into consideration any-time soon,” Wassenaar said.

“Wassenaar said. “I was very happy with a signification cost which would impact students’ rental fees.”

The second pair of gates built at the entrance facing the Health and Life Science building will also be closed only during the summer, except when the Department of Public Safety makes its rounds. Ultimately, Wassenaar added the purpose of the gates and the hedge fence is for the protection and needs of the students.

“i think it’s an improvement over the past because students can now feel as if they’re in a gated community,” Wassenaar said.

The committee discussed the three-day schedule’s problems.

“Students were brought to us concerns for classes for the Fall and Spring at the same time, which will reassure that the classes they need will be offered when they need them. Also, according to Berkman, each college will be assigned classrooms for specific time blocks across the entire academic year. Colleges will have the freedom to control how they distribute the classrooms and time blocks among their departments and individual courses. The committee will supervise them, and department that efficiently use their classroom space will be given additional space.

“This is not to take central control of the schedule but to create an equilibrium. I don’t think that everyone has a perfect schedule, but it will be improved,” Berkman said.

Another option is to group classes in six, nine, and 12 credits. For example, a group worth nine credits would include a history, biology and math classes. However, Berkman said this could limit the amount of class choices available for students because not all classes will be grouped.

Corinne Webb, the committee’s chair, suggested a scheduled system, supposedly used across the nation that consists on first asking students what classes they want to take, then creating the schedule based on demand.

Webb also considered opening registration earlier for classes at meeting at unpopular times for students who really need them.

The committee is also debating whether the change may decrease the number of full-time students, and how to accommodate scholarship recipients who can’t take electives and must take at least 15 credits to maintain their scholarship.

Berkman left before the meeting ended, but before doing so, he said he is considering hiring a team of logistics consultants and conducting a trial schedule.

Webb continued the discussion by asking how the 50-minute schedule will function during finals and how it will affect the personal and working life of students.

Jeff Gonzalez, associate vice president of office of planning and institutional effectiveness, presented a study conducted by the office of program policy analysis and government accountability, which analyzed classroom usage in Florida’s 11 state universities based on all schedules, number of classrooms and classrooms on use at every hour.

Gonzalez showed the low classroom usage at F11, which is 11.9 percent below the state average. Morning-time and Friday classroom utilization were both 18.8 percent and 16.6 percent below the average respectively.

“If we analyze the enrollment size and the class section counts, we clearly see we are doing something wrong, and that is what we’ll have to work on,” Gonzalez said.

According to Gonzalez, having 50-minute time blocks would allow the University to schedule 12 class times from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., while the current 75-minute classes only allows the scheduling of 8.5 classes during the same time interval.

“This is a commuting university, but this is not an excuse. There are other universities that do it and they do it well,” said Elizabeth Bejar, assistant provost, referring to Sylvia Berenguer, director of construction minor projects, larger classrooms are generally in the Health and Life Science Building.

Although there were no official solutions, Webb pointed out her interest in helping students ease in to the new schedule.

“I would like everyone here to encourage students to feel good about this,” Webb said.

The committee’s last meeting of the semester will be held on Monday. Class meetings will begin Jan. 5 and will be held every other Friday after that at 9 a.m. in MARC 330, University Park.
Conference looks for peace through religion

Jessica Solis
Staff Writer

To Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz, religion serves a universal purpose, which is peace, happiness and tolerance.

Chefitz was just one of a myriad of religious figures from around the country and the world united for a common cause on Nov. 30 at the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Kovens Conference Center for the World Peace Conference.

An interfaith panel comprised of Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Hindu speakers provided a non-political forum where peace was key topic of the discussion.

The rabbi spoke in a metaphor of people of faith climbing up a mountain, where at the base of the mountain are people of different religions and traditions, but at the top of the mountain is peace, a concept all religions embrace as reflected in the panel’s views.

“It’s at the summit where we resemble each other,” Chefitz said.

Organized by the Kriya Yoga Institute and FIU’s Center for the Study of Spirituality, the conference was called “Peace is our Birthright: Creating a Unified Vision for World Peace” and was designed to unite members of different religions to discuss the issues of peace, non-violence and spirituality.

More than a hundred people attended the event, a large crowd that included students and non-students alike.

The highlight of the night for many was the presence of Arun Gandhi, grandson of political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi.

Just like his grandfather, Arun Gandhi has dedicated his life to non-violence and spreading the message of peace.

Raisied in South Africa during apartheid, Gandhi said he was an angry child.

He was abused by white South Africans for being “too black,” and beaten by black South Africans for being “too white.”

“I was angry and frustrated,” he said. “I wanted eye-for-an-eye justice.”

Eventually, Gandhi learned his family’s way and began to believe in the principles of non-violence.

“We need to get out of that negative mold and into a positive one,” he told the audience. “We have to learn how to use our anger positively.”

Gandhi stressed that if people want peace in the world, they must work for it, and not just say they would like to see it achieved by others.

“Peace requires commitment, passion and understanding,” Gandhi said.

He also mentioned that there was more to religion than habit.

“There is a distinct difference between religion and rituals. It doesn’t matter if we pray 10 times a day if there’s no heart in it,” he said.

No one on the panel tried to separate the idea of peace from religion.

Rather each included a message of religion with a message of peace.

“When someone submits to God, he has peace,” said Imam Mohammed Zakaria Badat.

He reminded the audience that no religion is intolerant, no matter what the world is led to believe.

A soft-spoken Paramahamsa Prajnanananda, spiritual leader of the Kriya Yoga International Organization, spoke of the difference between spiritual and political peace, especially during a time of war where many are accustomed to use the word “peace” as meaning the end of war.

“The political mind speaks of peace in the whole world; a spiritual mind speaks of peace within,” he said.

The conference opened the eyes of audience members like Layla Shanti.

“It reminded me of a lot of things I’ve known, but I still learned a lot about how to know peace and bring it into your day-to-day life,” Shanti said.

Reverend Mary Tumpkin agreed with Rabbi Chefitz metaphor and said skepticism will eventually be overcome by seeing peace work.

“We have to practice what we already preach,” Tumpkin said.

QUESTIONS ON PEACE

Arun Ghandi
Why are young people feeling more and more separated from religion?

Swami Yukatmananda
What is your advice to students?

Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz
How do we separate the ego from the individuail so that we can achieve inner peace?

Rev. Mary Tumpkin
Poverty we save community consciousness spiritually in such a multi-ethnic community as the one we live in?

Lama Karma Chotso
How do we reach our inner spirituality in our social context, which you have got to be known as a spiritual leader in South Florida?

Samani Charitra Pragya
How can we start the change?

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE: Arun Gandhi (center left), Mahatma Gandhi’s grandson, is joined by Lama Karma Chotso (left), Swami Paramahamsa Prajnanananda (right) and Nathan Katz (center right).

This Week

MONDAY • DECEMBER 4

SPC Release Week-Game Day: 11 a.m., Panther Square
Campus Life Holiday Fest: 2 p.m.-4 p.m., Panther Square

TUESDAY • DECEMBER 5

SPC Release Week-Massage Day: 11 a.m., Panther Square
BBC Wish Givers Holiday Auction Party and Wish Walk: 6 p.m., WUC ballrooms

WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER 6

ISSS-Christmas Around the World: 12:30 p.m., WUC 363
CCC Impact Movement Weekly Lunch: 12:30 p.m., WUC 245
SGA General Meeting: 3:30 p.m., WUC 155

THURSDAY • DECEMBER 7

SPC Release Week-“Wild’n Out Ape Style”: 7 p.m., Panther Square

FRIDAY • DECEMBER 8

SPC Release Week-Video game tournament: 11 a.m., WUC ballrooms
SPC Release Week-“Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest” 7 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfie Theatre

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THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

6 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfie Theatre

Panther Square
Insufficient vacation time may be costing America

SHAWN SPROCKETT
Asst. Opinion Editor

You’re completely stressing out about exams, aren’t you? Maybe you’re freaking out about your relentless work schedule, too. I bet you’ll even be anxious over winter break, with all of your multiple holiday obligations.

The truth is you’re not alone, especially here in the United States, where vacations have become increasingly rare. It may come as a surprise to Americans to imagine the government forcing companies to provide paid vacation for their employees, but in much of the first world this is becoming the norm.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the United States is the only industrialized nation that does not legally mandate paid vacations. According to the institute, the average American worker receives an average of 2 weeks off per year. China mandates 30 days, and Japan mandates 21. Other nations have much longer required vacation times: France, Germany, Ireland, and Norway each mandate 30 days off per year. These are significantly longer than the United States’ paid vacation days. The average American worker produces $47.42 worth of goods and services an hour, while the average Norwegian produces $62.66 per hour. The tiny island nation of Ireland produces more than the United States, yielding $62.66 an hour. Even France is more efficient, with an average $54.03 made in an hour.

To make matters worse, Americans are suffering from stress and constant pressure from their employers to put in more hours. Ask yourself how many hours you put into your job this week. Now consider this: in Germany, the economic powerhouse of Europe, laborers put in an average of 18.6 hours a week.

In the United States, the average person works 46.2 weeks of the 52-week year. The French average is almost 2 months shorter. Stereotypes paint countries like Japan and China as the most industrious and dedicated producers, but the EPI shows that both nations’ citizens receive a higher yearly average vacation time than Americans. Japan requires that workers take at least 2 weeks off per year. China mandates 3 “Golden Weeks” that allow citizens a chance to recover.

If other nations are producing more by working less, then I believe the American government should stop and think for a second. Human beings do have physical limitations. There is such a thing as working too hard. Taking a break now and then refreshes you, clears your mind and allows you to concentrate better upon your return.

So when exams have passed, work is closed and the holidays have arrived, do yourself a favor and enjoy your time off. With the way things are here, you may not get another chance soon.

Shawn Sprockett
Editor in Chief

SCHEDULE CHANGE THREATENS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

As I opened my FIU webmail account, I was outraged to find that MWF classes had been ripped from my schedule. Ironically enough, at the same time, I was handed an issue of The Beacon containing an article titled “Students have hard time juggling class, jobs, sanity.”

Well, if students had to juggle before, now they will be forced to become trapeze artists. Once again, the school sugar coats its reasons for MWF classes by claiming that this will aid student’s learning process. Sure, more interaction could aid student’s learning process. However, I strongly object to keeping students up and demand a change. After all college is supposed to be about us, the students, isn’t it?

I strongly believe that the board has failed to analyze the teaching and learning styles of their students. For those that are ordinary students, the school has failed to understand the needs of their student body. This is not about whether or not one receives an unfair advantage, but about whether or not the academic performance of our students will be affected by the schedule change. As I opened my FIU webmail account, I was outraged to find that MWF classes had been ripped from my schedule. Ironically enough, at the same time, I was handed an issue of The Beacon containing an article titled “Students have hard time juggling class, jobs, sanity.”

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C. Joel Marino
Assistant Opinion Editor

TO THE EDITOR

Wild dogs pose rabies threats

I am writing you about the recent article that appeared in The Beacon about the roaming “or ‘campus’ dogs.” I strongly object to keeping them around and I feel that animal control needs to take care of the problem now.

After seeing the article, I sympathize with the students who see them as campus pets, I have one word for those people: rabies. The campus has its share of other wild animals, such as raccoon, which are notorious for carrying rabies.

If people are genuinely concerned about what will happen to these dogs, then I encourage them to adopt one, take it to a vet and have it spayed or neutered, and vaccinated. Unfortunately, these dogs pose a health and security risk by roaming around the campus. I also greatly enjoy the nature preserve, which is the winter home to many migratory birds, but now I am unable and afraid to go into the preserve because of these dogs.

Please don’t get me wrong, I love animals and have four rabbits which are all rescues (and live in my home and are “fixed”), but roaming dogs do not belong on a campus. It is a job for students, faculty and staff. These dogs are dangerous and should be taken care of. Surely there are some wonderful people out there willing to adopt them and give them proper homes and care.

Georgiana Hall
Astronomy Lab Manager
Physics Department

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Physics Department
Internet gives mourners a place to express grief, pain

Alicia Castaneda’s friends and family grieve on a personal Web page the 19-year-old Orange Park girl created before she died three months ago. The smiling pictures she posted, listings of her favorite TV shows and music — even references to her boyfriend, Joshua Maulbey, who’s charged in her beating death — they’re all still there.

The postings found on popular social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook live on as a virtual facsimile of the deceased, letting grippers say goodbye just as they would have said hello before tragedy struck.

“Grief is a very dark, empty place,” Harvey said in an e-mail interview. “Emotions don’t stick to a schedule, either. When I am grieving at 2 a.m. or 4 a.m., I won’t call anyone, but I will log in and pour my heart out in an e-mail or I will post a poem on MySpace.”

A screen capture of the myspace.com page for Alicia Castaneda.

“Amanda Lenhart, senior research specialist for the Pew Internet and American Life Project in Washington, D.C., said her group has ongoing research into the impact of social networking sites. Their role in people’s lives — especially young people’s lives — creates an obvious need for the grieving tool is not a new one, but use as such is accelerating.

More and more funeral directors are trying to harness the idea to enrich brick-and-mortar business, said Clay Roberson, president of the Florida Funeral Directors Association. “I think it’s a great tool,” he said, adding his three-decade-old Port Charlotte funeral home put up a Web site six months ago. Now, friends and family can post messages and even download video tributes. “Some people can’t make it to a schedule, either. When I am grieving at 2 a.m. or 4 a.m., I won’t call anyone, but I will log in and pour my heart out in an e-mail or I will post a poem on MySpace.”

A screen capture of the myspace.com page for Alicia Castaneda.
MySpace, Facebook among grieving tools for college students

MOURNING, page 6

to the funeral, but they still want to grieve. A lot of times the postings are funny stories and the, ‘I know him’ and other things the family would never know,” Roberson said.

The downside of Internet memorials comes from those who log on not to grieve but to voice a grievance.

Of Legacy’s 75 employees, 45 are dedicated to reading through guestbook entries before they’re posted, deleting those that are in poor taste.

“Unfortunately, there are some folks out there who try to use the guestbooks to air dirty laundry,” Ferguson said. “It’s a tiny percentage of the millions of entries we receive each year.”

Most social networking services will let a Web site live on until activity ceases for a year.

In the meantime, Mike Patterson tries to determine who’s dead and who’s simply not posting anymore. His Web site, MyDeathSpace, grew from an online forum he started in August 2005, now attracting roughly 20,000 visitors a day. It links news articles about people’s deaths to the personal Web pages they created.

A screen capture of the Legacy.com guestbook for Cpl. Joshua Watkins who was killed in Iraq October 2006.

“I just wanted to show teens that they’re not invincible,” the 25-year-old San Francisco man said.

Some computer security experts theorize that online memorials could be an emerging tool for identity theft, albeit postmortem.

Dave Marcus, security and research manager for McAfee, said the criminal mind could use what little it learns from the sites to prey on people’s emotions, seeking sensitive information about the deceased’s bank accounts and credit statements.

“They’re wearing their hearts on their sleeves and opening up their Internet kimonos,” he said. “It comes down to being very careful.”

Harvey said she raised an eyebrow at the MySpace page her daughter posted while she was in high school. Now, she’s seen such value in the service that she’s started a site of her own, which she uses to post “I love you” messages to her daughter’s page.

“I thought it was absurd for children or anyone to post all their information, pictures, etc. on the Internet for anyone to see,” she said. “I wasn’t aware of all the wonderful ways you could connect.”
MOVIE Apocalypto

REUBEN PEREIRA
Senior Staff Writer

Only Mel Gibson would make a film as bizarre and sensational as Apocalypto. The director’s fourth film is a huge improvement over his previous film, the supremely over-rated and $300 million-grossing The Passion of the Christ. 

Apocalypto is engaging, involving and, above all, interesting. It takes you into a world that has never been filmed before and shows us the genius of a civilization, but also reveals its barbaric side. It shows us like something out of Thomas More’s Utopia.

Its beginnings, but our primal animalistic nature still remains. Apocalypto shares many similarities with The Passion of the Christ. Like The Passion, it is spoken in an ancient language. Like the Jesus movie, it is set in an ancient time period. And like The Passion, it’s an extremely violent and bloody affair. This film isn’t for the meek at heart.

If decapitations, blood, gore and faces being ripped off don’t appeal to you, then chances are that you won’t enjoy this movie.

However, unlike The Passion of the Christ, it won’t have Christian fanatics or churches supporting it. Also, there isn’t any controversial buzz surrounding the film. Apocalypto has added disadvantage of Gibson’s anti-Semitic rants over the summer.

His world is destroyed one morning when the village is ravaged and burnt to the ground by hunters from the Mayan civilization. He and his fellow tribesmen are then captured. The crucial of the film chronicles Jaguar Paw’s escape from his captives and his journey back home to find his wife and child.

This is what makes the film the thrilling adventure it is.

Mel Gibson has always been a master at visual direction and Apocalypto is no exception. The film is stunning to watch. Because the dialogue of Apocalypto is in Yucatec, an ancient Mayan language, Gibson keeps the dialogue down to a minimum, which makes the visuals impressive. Even more impressive is the recreation of the ancient civilization.

Gibson’s devotion to realism really pays off because, for once, you actually believe that you’re watching something from the time period. Be it the hunting techniques, the rituals, the humor or the lives of the natives, Gibson nails it.

Go watch Apocalypto. It’s something different but it’s definitely worth your time. It deserves to be seen on the big screen.

GAME Final Fantasy XII

LUI S H. GARCIA
Staff Writer

It has been almost five years since we have seen a traditional Final Fantasy. Granted, there have been plenty of spin-offs, and XI is still popular in the online realms, but now the wait is over. Final Fantasy XII is here in a big way because this installment of the series takes some bold moves that many will either embrace or despise.

The world of Ivalice has definitely seen some drastic changes since the Tactics spin-offs. On top of new races like the Bangaa and the Seeq living alongside humans, medieval fantasy has married high technology to give birth to a vast unique world not seen very often, while taking design cues from their PS1 classic Vagrant Story.

War and political intrigue are the setups for the storyline. As the Archadian Empire continues their advance taking over neighboring states throughout Ivalice, the kingdom of Dalmasca attempts to negotiate peace, though other motives soon surface. As expected from the series, the presentation does not disappoint. The graphics are top-notch and present the world of Ivalice in a realistic way. Cities are bustling with activity and nearly every locale explored is a sight to behold. The soundtrack also does a great job of complementing the game’s various settings, and the voice acting is handled beautifully given an already very well written script (with translation by Alexander O. Smith) with some Old English thrown in.

Going along with the XII’s radical changes with art direction and sound, the gameplay offers the most significant departure from the previous titles: encounters are no longer random and combat is now handled in real time.

The quest is extensive, while not too long and there are plenty of side quests to embark so players who wish to explore the world. There are occasional load times, but otherwise, the game moves along at a very steady pace. While some will be turned off by the new direction Final Fantasy XII takes, there is no denying that the magic that the series has had is very evident.

It is possible to say that XII is the best of the modern-day FFs (VII onward) and SQUARE-ENIX’s effort on this title clearly shows it in every aspect. With the next console generation ahead, XII signals the end of its run on the PS2 with a bang and takes a bow that is greatly deserved.

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HIPS DON’T LIE

DANCING DIVAS: Students Maheen Moughal (left) and Anastasia Wallace (center) learn some belly dancing moves from dancer Melly (right) in the Graham Center Pit on Dec. 1. The performance, which took place at noon and was set up through the Student Government Association, was part of a showcase celebrating Egyptian culture.

Poker Time
JUST MINUTES FROM FIU

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GAME

Every Extend Extra

LUIS H. GARCIA
Staff Writer

When the PlayStation Portable system debuted last March, many players were caught by the spell of Q Entertainment’s colorful and musically hypnotic hit puzzle game Lumines.

Once again, Tetsuya Mizoguchi and Q Entertainment bring gamers another unique puzzler to challenge their senses on the PSP: Every Extend Extra.

Anyone familiar with Mizoguchi’s previous works like Rez and Lumines knows what to expect: elaborate colorful visual stimulation, a danceable soundtrack and simple yet high addictive gameplay.

E3 is certainly no exception to this trend – Q Entertainment managed to add a few new tricks to the game while retaining elements from the previous installments.

You still use your own lives to create explosions for combo points, time and lives as well as earn “Quicken Pick-ups” to speed up game progression to make the game more frantic. Also, you still start with three minutes to complete each stage.

The major changes are numerous. Now, there are more stages to play and unlock and, in the tradition of Lumines, each stage offers a different art styles, themes and sound design that makes the game quite a light show to watch as you play.

The number of explosion options has increased as well. Now you can charge your detonation by holding a button as well as create a double explosion by holding any shoulder button before detonation.

Bosses are now more challenging as well. In order to do damage to them, you must first create a combo that exceeds a certain number before you can affect the boss, while you dodge more enemies and bullets.

Multiple paths to different stages become available as you progress by fulfilling certain requirements in a stage, which adds to the longevity and challenge of the game.

Other modes in the game include Stage Selection, Boss Rush (where you only play against the stage bosses one after another), a new Versus mode, which allows for game sharing so only one person with a copy of the game is needed and also included is the original Every Extend.

Once again, Q Entertainment brings gamers a dazzling, almost hypnotic array of light, color and music, blended with game play that is accessible to anyone.

Given the PSP’s portability, E3 is a perfect fit for gamers on the go or those who just want to kill a few minutes that could easily turn into hours.

Q Entertainment managed to add a few new tricks… while retaining elements from previous installments.
Del Rio, Thomas linked by Dolphins' decision

It's borne itself out. I was at the end of my career and was nervous. We went to go play Chicago. I missed like five or six tackles. I thought I was going to cut. That's just the way the business is. It happens to every one of us. When you get older, those younger guys will come in and take your job. Even if you are a better player at the time, it's the best decision going with somebody who's less against the (salary) cap."

"When Jimmy told me that, I didn't know that they let him go. I was a little shocked after that. I was a little nervous. We went to go play Chicago. I missed like five or six tackles. I thought I was going to cut. That's just the way the business is. It happens to every one of us. When you get older, those younger guys will come in and take your job. Even if you are a better player at the time, it's the best decision going with somebody who's less against the (salary) cap."

"I learned a lot from Jack. He was a great player in his 11 years," Thomas said. "I took his job. That's not what happened. To me, it was Jimmy that wanted to look toward the future, and that's how it panned out. When you get older, those younger guys will come in and take your job. Even if you are a better player at the time, it's the best decision going with somebody who's less against the (salary) cap."

"It was in the team meeting room. He came and told me and said, 'You're the man now,'" Thomas said. "I just thought I was going to start for a week to help motivate Jack, but Jack had a great game against Tampa. I remember like it was yesterday. He made a big third-down-and-1 play, so I was thinking I'm just going to back up the whole year. If he went down, I'd have a chance."

"I was at the end of my career and was hoping to get another year with Jimmy down there in Miami and this talented kid came in there and just made play after play everywhere," Del Rio recalled. "It was obviously a good, sound decision by Jimmy. I've been fishing with Jimmy for years and ended up with his first head job in Jacksonville four years ago."

"I was at the end of my career and was hoping to get another year with Jimmy down there in Miami and this talented kid came in there and just made play after play everywhere," Del Rio recalled. "It was obviously a good, sound decision by Jimmy. I've been fishing with Jimmy for years and ended up with his first head job in Jacksonville four years ago."

"I guess I did a pretty good job mentoring, (told Del Rio joked."

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"I was at the end of my career and was hoping to get another year with Jimmy down there in Miami and this talente
Bostic’s goal is to help young African-Americans

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always joke around. That’s the type of person he was.”

According to Bostic, he became worried as he watched friend after friend lose his life.

“I still believed in God, but I was scared for my life,” Bostic said.

His family and friends lent Bostic strength as his losses mounted. His parents told him not to worry because he had no control over the losses he had suffered.

“I told him to stay focused. I let him know these types of things happen,” the elder Bostic said.

Bostic is now concentrating on giving back to those who have helped him.

He is on the verge of receiving a bachelor’s degree in sports management with a minor in entrepreneurship.

“I want to take care of my family, whether I’m playing in the NFL or working,” Bostic said.

Bland has known Bostic for years and has given him advice on entrepreneurship and life.

“We talk about all sorts of subjects,” Bland said. “Nothing specific, but we talk about life in general.”

Bostic also wants to make sure he never sees another young face in a casket. He wants to help kids in the African-American community to reduce violence on the streets.

“My goal is to help kids. Everyday, African-American men are dying. Families have to go through that,” Bostic said.

He is now a guide to his little brother — after so many years of being led by his older brothers, friends and Bland.

Following the grief he has experienced, Bostic believes he has become more strong-willed.

“My whole outlook on life has changed, but I’m not going to feel sorry for myself,” Bostic said.

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The BEACON is always looking for talented and reliable individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don’t be shy.

Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.
FIU is among the many college football programs in search of new coaches. So as coaches bounce around from team to team, being recycled like old car parts, the million dollar question is: who will land at FIU?

Many reports have said that some candidates have emerged as leaders for vacant head coaching position: University of Miami defensive coordinator Randy Shannon, former UM offensive coordinator and current San Diego Chargers tight ends coach Rob Chudzinski, University of Georgia defensive coordinator Willie Martinez, UF offensive line coach Mario Cristobal and University of Arkansas quarterbacks coach Alex Wood.

All five candidates have ties to South Florida, especially when it comes to recruiting.

So let’s separate the truth from fiction and see who would be the best fit for the Golden Panthers next season.

**Randy Shannon**

Fiction. Don’t look for UM’s defensive coordinator to be stalking the sides lines of FIU next season. Besides being recruited by FIU, many believe him to be Larry Coker’s successor if UM can’t land Rutgers coach Greg Schiano. Along with the possibility of coaching the Hurricanes, Shannon said he would never coach his son, Xavier, who is the center for the Golden Panthers.

“I don’t believe in getting a son on your team, if not he won’t develop as a kid. If I’m here and he’s here, he won’t ever grow up,” Randy said. “Go any where you want to grow but I told him you’ll never go any where where I’m coaching.”

**Rob Chudzinski**

Another former UM coach, Chudzinski ran the offense when they were scoring over 30 points a game and the Hurricanes had the ability to score at any moment. He is currently the San Diego Chargers tight ends coach and has been credited with the development at All-Pro Antonio Gates, the best tight end in the National Football League.

**Willie Martinez**

Fiction. On Nov. 29, Carter Strickland of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that Martinez had taken his name out of the running for the position.

“I’m extremely flattered that Florida International called and I had the opportunity to interview,” Martinez said to the Journal-Constitution. “But our family is very happy in Athens and I look forward to continuing to be part of the building process that’s going on at Georgia. I think we have a lot to look forward to here.”

While defensive coordinator at Georgia, his defense has ranked among the top in the country year in and year out. Martinez used to play defensive back for UM and graduated from Hollywood Hills High School.

Money talks, though, and many coaches have denied being interested in coaching jobs only to surprise everyone at the last minute and leave.

**Mario Cristobal**

Here’s where things get interesting, Cristobal is widely regarded as one of the best recruiters in the country, especially in South Florida. He has a good relationship with high school coaches in Miami-Dade and Broward county.

There is speculation that Cristobal may not be retained if Shannon is rewarded the head coaching position at UM. Cristobal is also good friends with Rutgers head coach Greg Schiano, who has been mentioned as the leading candidate to be UM’s new head coach. It is worthy to note that he was offered a coaching position by the New York Jets, but declined the offer to remain at UM.

**Alex Wood**

The Arkansas Razorbacks’ offensive coordinator has also been mentioned as a possible option. Wood doesn’t have much experience recruiting in South Florida, but has more than 26 years of coaching.

Remember a couple of guys named Butch Davis and Jimmy Johnson?

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**SERGIO BONILLA**

Contributing Writer

The Royal Funeral Service holds the casket of a young boy.

The funeral service attendant watches the boy’s family sobbing and gripping the casket. The attendant hides his emotions and directs the family to their seats.

The funeral service attendant is FIU linebacker Alexander Bostic III, who worked part-time at the service this past summer. The senior linebacker’s father is a pastor who serves as the service’s chaplain. It was through his father that Bostic met and was mentored by Leon Blund, Royal Funeral Service’s owner.

Bostic was surprised when Bland suggested he should work at funeral services part-time.

“I’m working where? Funerals had always been one of my biggest fears,” Bostic said.

Several of Bostic’s friends have died throughout high school and college: Damien Miller, Eviton Brown, Lance Preston and Bryan Pata.

Eviton Brown taught Bostic the fundamentals of playing Linebacker. He was a starter at Norland High School at the time, while Bostic rode the bench. He looked up to Brown who was shot and killed while Bostic was still in high school.

“He was one of my closest friends. He showed me the ropes and he played Linebacker just like me,” Bostic said.

Damien Miller was Bostic’s good friend. He was killed by a gunshot fired by another friend.

“They were playing with a gun and Damien was shot in the neck,” Bostic said.

By sophomore year in high school, Bostic had lost two of his closest friends. When Bostic began to excel as the team’s starter, he admits he began to let the success get to his head.

“I thought I was so big. Tenth grade was my [indoor suspension] year. I was the class clown,” he said.

Luckily, Bostic had two older brothers, Eric and Sheldon.

“They taught me how to handle all types of situations. Anything I would think of doing they had already done,” Bostic said.

Lance Preston, a Golden Panther linebacker, similarly served as a guide when Bostic first arrived at FIU. Preston was killed in a motorcycle accident this past Labor Day weekend.

“He took me under his wing. I was one of the youngest players on the team, too,” Bostic said.

On Nov. 7, Bryan Pata, the University of Miami’s defensive lineman, was shot and murdered. Bostic was in disbelief when he heard the news several of Bostic’s friends have died.

Though Pata attended Central High School, Norland’s rivals, both were still friends.

“Not Bryan,” Bostic said. “I couldn’t believe it. I would see him at the combines and he would...”