FIU temporarily escapes tuition increase

NAIHOB GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Imagine seeing tuition rise by $1,000 from one year to the next. In the State of Florida, where average yearly tuition is $3,326, this would be a 30 percent spike. Florida has the lowest public university tuition rates in the nation and earlier this month, Gov. Charlie Crist’s budget blueprint for 2007-08 included a no-incase stance on tuition.

Currently, public universities have no say on the tuition they charge undergraduate students. So how is it that future undergraduates at the University of Florida may stand to pay an extra $1,000 per year? Bernard “Bernie” Machen, UF’s president, came up with an answer that so far has received the approval of that university’s Student Government Association and the State’s Board of Governors. Revenue from what has been named the four-year Academic Enhancement Program, which would charge students $500 per semester, would be used to hire 200 new faculty and 100 academic counselors.

Maidique hears student complaints

JESSICA SOUS
Staff Writer

Students stood in line and voiced their various complaints – some personal, others relating to academics – during a Town Hall meeting soon after University President Modesto A. Maidique offered the crowd a glimpse into FIU’s future.

To help students get involved in the meeting, the Student Government Council created a batch of questions that students could ask during the meeting, but students like senior Julie Ruiz came prepared with their own inquiries for Maidique.

“I want to ask him why some classes aren’t offered every semester,” she said. “It’s hard to graduate in four years when you don’t have all the classes.”

Students mainly expressed concern about the resources they felt their respective academic departments were lacking and wanted to know what administrators were doing to improve certain services. The president often asked the appropriate administrators what each department was doing to serve its students. At times he answered with a simple “I’ll work on it.”

Keeping the BBC food court open for longer hours on Fridays and paying the extra $300 in tuition for online classes were just some of the issues students felt strongly about.

“We have not been funded to do an adequate job in online teaching,” Maidique admitted.

Other students wanted to know the current status of the new three-day schedule, which begins Fall semester. Questions were raised about how the new schedule will affect Panther Express shuttle service prices.

Maidique then asked students if a weekly bus pass with unlimited rides at a fixed price would be appealing. The audience nodded in approval.

Due to the number of questions regarding the schedule change, Corinne Webb, vice president of Enrollment Services, was asked to explain some of the move’s advantages.

“By pushing the schedule out to five days, we were able to improve services without increasing costs,” she said. “The schedule will affect student’ experiences in the classroom and the Panther Express shuttle service for students that currently use the service.”

Other students wanted to know the course offerings and if they would be the same as those provided the previous week.

The new schedule will affect Panther Express shuttle service prices.

Before Maidique answered questions from the audience, he gave a presentation that focused on FIU’s immediate and long-term goals, as well as highlighting its previous achievements and how to make the University go from “bigger to better.” He also acknowledged BBC’s 30th anniversary.

“We have evolved from a small upper division college to a large branch campus,” Maidique said of BBC, which is the biggest branch campus in Florida.

Maidique’s plan centered on allowing FIU to gain national recognition by strengthening existing programs and creating new opportunities for the school, such as joining the National Association of Schools in Florida.
**THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS**

**MONDAY • FEBRUARY 26**

LGBTQ Spiritual Day: 12 p.m., GC 150 (UP)
Panther Rage Meeting: 4 p.m., GC 140 (UP)
Philosophy of the East & West: 7:30 p.m., GC 340 (UP)
SPC General Meeting: 4 p.m., WUC 159 (BBC)
MPAS African American “Sankofa”
Exhibition: 10 a.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)
Heard Distinguished Lecture Series: 6:30 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

**TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 27**

Honors Council Society Fair: 11 a.m., GC Forum (UP)
SPC Concerts’ Two Band Tuesdays: 12 p.m., Gracie’s Grill (UP)
Honors Council General Meeting: 3:30 p.m., GC 150 (UP)
SOC Club Fair: 11 a.m., ACI Atrium Area (BBC)
SPC Pan-African – Tribute to Women in Hip-Hop: 7 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

**WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 28**

SGA General Meeting: 3:30 p.m., GC 150 (UP)
GSA Gradskullers: 6 p.m., Gracie’s Grill (UP)
BBC Career and Internship Fair: 10 a.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)
Panther Power Meeting: 1 p.m., WUC 159 (BBC)
BBC Wishgivers – Casino Night: 6 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

**THURSDAY • MARCH 1**

PEACE - International Women’s Day: 12 p.m., GC Pit (UP)
Dance Marathon Lip Sync Competition: 8 p.m., GC Ballrooms (UP)
On Point Poetry – Poetry Night: 5 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

**FRIDAY • MARCH 2**

ENGAGE Leadership Workshop: 11 a.m., GC 305 (UP)
National Association of Women in Construction Meeting: 7 p.m., EC 1105 (Engineering Center)
SPC Film – “The Last King of Scotland”: 7 p.m. & 10 p.m., GC 140 (UP)
Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro: All Day, Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall (UP)

**SATURDAY • MARCH 3**

Dance Marathon: 12 p.m., Pharmed Arena (UP)
Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro: All Day, Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall (UP)

**SUNDAY • MARCH 4**

Dance Marathon: 12 a.m. – 12 p.m, Pharmed Arena (UP)
Fourth Annual College of Law Dominos Tournament: 5 p.m., College of Law (UP)

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**Compiled by Reuben Pereira**

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**NEWS**

**FEE, page 1**

The program is estimated to generate $25 million.

“The notion that UF is significantly under-funded is generally recognized,” Machen said in a student forum held last November.

Howard Rock, a senate member, is among those who believe that the same notion applies to FIU.

“Florida has some of the lowest tuition in the country, which means that we are a severely under-funded university system,” Rock said. “You get what you pay for.”

In the Jan. 16 Faculty Senate meeting, Chairman Bruce Haupli reported on his recent visit to Tallahassee for a meeting of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates.

Among the points discussed was UF’s enhancement fee initiative, something that Chancellor Mark Rosenberg reported warned representatives from the various state universities about.

Haupli told The Beacon that in his meeting with Rosenberg, the chancellor hinted that, pending legislative approval, universities should be sensitive to students’ ability to pay the cost of an enhancement fee.

Haupli reported that the chancellor said that “different institutions need to adopt different strategies.”

He added that some universities should pursue enrollment growth while others should maintain a level enrollment.

The latter option describes UF, which is no longer looking to enroll past its approximately 50,000 students.

FIU, on the other hand, listed enrollment growth as its first operating budget priority for the 2007 legislative session. If its request is approved, FIU would receive $31.7 million for 1,899 new full-time students.

At the Jan. 16 Faculty Senate meeting, the words “enhancement fee” caught the attention of Senator Rock.

A few weeks later, Rock told The Beacon that he had changed his mind about the enhancement fee, though not about the problems that it would help alleviate.

“Second thought, an enhancement fee may not be the way to go,” Rock said.

Haupli shared a similar sentiment.

“We’re getting more money for enrollment growth, but also more students. At one point we become stretched, and the money is not enough extra,” he said. “The new MWF schedule will free up a lot of classroom space, but we won’t necessarily have all the instructors in those classrooms. This worries me, and it should worry [students] too.”

Leon echoed Haupli’s concern over enrollment growth, saying that FIU “would one day reach a point where it can’t grow anymore.”

Leon was optimistic about the University’s ability to rely on fundraising, while Rock cited the Florida’s going to have to come to terms with what it wants to do with tuition.

Bills allowing Florida universities to charge an educational enhancement fee were simultaneously introduced this month in the Florida House of Representatives and Senate.
Student elections approaching

SGA, page 1

is still being discussed, but a definite decision will be made before candidates begin campaigning. The hope would be that we give more of the student body the ability to vote,” Andrews said.

Last election year, 1,539 students voted for president and vice-president and 3,187 students voted for representatives-at-large, which is only about 10 percent of the student population, according to Tulloch.

The whole process comes to an end April 12 at 12 p.m. when the winners are announced in the GC Pit for UP candidates and at the Wolfe University Center for Biscayne Bay candidates. Leon hasn’t confirmed if his name will be on the ballot this year.

“If I’m the best person for the students and the University, I’ll do it,” Leon said.

SGC-UP Notes

Feb. 21 Call to order: 3:34 p.m., Adjournment: 4:40 p.m.

President (Alfonso “Albie” Leon):

- Special Presentation: Laura Garcia, USAS [United Students Against Sweatshops]. Want a committee to join our campaign to discover more about Coke allegations and sign a letter that requests information from Coke.
- Leon: “This would branch off of USAS. We want SGA representation on this committee.”

Chief of Cabinet (Larissa Lockett):
- SGA Lecture Series March 12 and 13; we will disclose the lecturers later.

Speaker of the House (Rocio Perez):

- Feb. 28 - Student Leader Luncheon - Celebration for everything we have accomplished this year. Funds will come out of the SGA Cares Campaign allocation.
- Public Safety Forum next Feb. 28, 1 - 2:30 p.m. discussing burglary and theft, specifically laptop and auto theft.

Student Health Advisory (Rebecca Louidor):
- Health forum will be next week Tues. Feb. 27 3-5:00 p.m.

Elections Board (Judene Tulloch):
- Revisions to elections code are complete. Please review before council next week so you are prepared to vote.
- “As of now, you cannot campaign before April 4. If you do, that is grounds for disqualifications … Campaigning is promoting yourself as a candidate.”

Judicial Board (Kathryn Cubbon):
- Meeting Feb. 10 went well. We were able to complete the revisions to the bylaws. It’s 13 pages. We are looking into the best way to promote that to Council.

Absences:
- Jennifer Ruiz (At-large), Mikana Maeda (Architecture), Brian Andino (CHUA), Maria Garcia (Law), Charlene Collazo (Arts & Sciences)

Announcements:
- Diversity Week next week. Many events will occur at this campus and at BBC.

Week-long events focus on school diversity

KHADJA HARRIS
Contributing Writer

In order to represent the diverse community found at FIU, the Student Government Association along with organizations such as Residence Life and Counseling and Psychological Services founded the Peer Educators Advocating Cultural Enrichment group in 2000.

PEACE is run by students trained to be peer educators who advocate a multicultural environment which understands and respects people of various races, physical conditions, religions, national origins, genders, ages and sexual orientations.

In an effort to spread understanding on diversity, PEACE has planned four days of events in both University Park and the Biscayne Bay Campus through this week. The events, called “PEACEds of Culture,” will start Feb. 26 and go on until March 1.

Monday’s theme will focus on the effects culture has on spirituality. One of the main events will be a discussion called “Spiritual Diversity,” a forum of how one’s sexuality has an effect on their spiritual beliefs, and vice-versa. This will take place in the Graham Center, room 150, at 12 p.m.

PEACE also plans to have a spirituality fair from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., as well as a spirituality forum from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in GC 243.

Tuesday’s topic for the day is cultural sexuality. Traveling exhibit from the African-American Museum will be on display from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the GC Pit.

On Thursday, an information session on gender, religions and around the world,” said Jennifer Camacho, graduate assistant at the Women’s Center.

The Beacon is published on Monday and Thursday during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer sessions. Questions regarding display advertising and billing should be directed to the Advertising Manager at 305-348-2790. Mailing address: Graham Center, room 210, Miami, FL 33199. Fax number is 305-348-2712. Biscayne Bay Campus is 305-919-4722. Office hours are 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. E-mail: bea-ww@fiu.edu. Visit us online at www.beaconnewspaper.com

The Beacon is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by student and services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.
Student debt: a growing problem

Going to college is expensive—really expensive. The tuition seems to go up every year, textbooks seem to release a new edition as soon as the last one leaves the printing press, and of course, the ever growing list of fees. Even in low-tuition states like Florida, the college experience is becoming less and less accessible to many young people. With federal financial aid taking cut after cut, many students are forced to work employment as a means of offsetting costs.

According to The Project on Student Debt, an organization that investigates the economic implications of student borrowing, three out of four full-time students have jobs and nearly half of them work more than 25 hours a week. As a student leader myself, it frustrates me that countless students never get the chance to be involved on campus because they have to work full-time to pay their tuition.

The way I see it, the country's current administration is seemingly dead-set on making higher education out of reach for the working class, and students who do scrape by are being robbed of their college experience because of it. For many, a minimum wage job still isn't enough, and students are left to take loans in order to finance their education, which results in massive debt for several years after graduation. I myself had no choice but to go do that very route. The non-profit sector suddenly becomes a lot less attractive when the good folks over at Sallie Mae want their $30,000 back.

With graduates burdened with the task of repaying loans, the very dreams that inspired them to attend college in the first place are now deferred – like purchasing a home or starting a family. With the cost of a college education now more like a shackles than a sacrifice, the question is whether or not it's worth it. Why work so hard and spend so much, just to have a sizeable portion of your post-college income go towards repaying loans? Frankly, there's not much of a choice anymore. In today's highly competitive job market, a post-secondary degree is practically a basic requirement.

Through the opportunities I've had to interact with other students from around the country, I've realized both how common my story is and how many students face even greater challenges such as juggling classes, a full-time job and a family life, all while depending on borrowed funds to pay for their education. As an international student, I am neither eligible to vote nor to receive financial aid; and yet in my time with Student Government, I've organized campaigns on both these issues. They might not affect me directly, but I still recognize the fact that if students don't take a united stance on the issues that affect us, then we will continue to be ignored.

Top athletics, Nobel Prize among Maidaque’s FIU goals

“Can only go up from there,” he joked, telling the audience he hopes that in the next five years the Golden Panthers can be a top 25 or top 30 team. Maidaque demurred on the possible implementation of a tiered university system that would grant higher funds to universities placed at the top. The proposed system could reduce FIU’s funding from the state and remove many of its graduate and doctorate programs.

“We have absolutely no interest in opting in. We already are a football university,” he told The Beacon. “I have also said that our goal is to become one of the nation’s best research universities.”

At the end of the meeting, students like Margarita Portnova thought Maidaque did the best he could with the Town Hall format. “Like a good politician, he points you in the right direction,” she said. Others still felt frustrations about the University’s slow progress.

“Everything that is scheduled for improvement is for two, three years from now. We need more improvements now,” sophomore Larna Odedsky said. “That means three years of bad food, bad security, bad housing.”

Vice Provost Damien Fernandez is aware of the frustration students stated, but expressed that because of money issues, upgrading the University’s services all at once is easier said than done.

“We cannot control our funding,” he told The Beacon. “We cannot provide all the services that we would want.” Nevertheless, Fernandez thought the Town Hall Meeting achieved its purpose. “It has been very useful because it shows how engaged our students are.”
Building a stadium will boost FIU's prestige

JUAN CARLOS CURA
Contributing Writer

Our University is not a prestigious institution; it has never been. Prestige is an attribute earned, not given, and moreover, it is difficult to obtain. Proven universities have an unfair advantage – time. Their tradition and reputation have naturally evolved while ours is being artificially accelerated. What took others a century to build, FIU is trying to accomplish in half the time. Not many people outside of Florida have heard of FIU. When you graduate – when you’re looking for a job, a graduate school, a law school, or just conversing – and you tell people where you studied, where their company is located, you spent a good portion of your life, you improve? Do you reject a proposal to build a new stadium and implicitly inform all prospective students and alumni. It improves the value of your degree and inspires loyalty in current students and alumni. It improves student life and the overall quality of the ‘College experience’.

College is expensive, but it’s an investment. It is an investment in your future – in yourself – whether you’re attending to improve your market value, to hone your intellectual, or improve your social skills. The more prestigious the university becomes, the more professors, athletes and students they attract.

Granted, they might get better ahead of themselves. The football team played hard, but had nothing to show for it. Next year they might be better or it might not. But how do you improve? Do you reject a proposal to build a new stadium and implicitly inform all prospective students and alumni that the administration is not interested in improving student life and the overall quality of the ‘College experience’.

The quality of a university is not judged solely on their academic performance, but also on their athletic championships. The college sports phenomenon has gripped America’s attention and a college’s athletic success not only attracts prospective students, but also improves the value of your degree and inspires loyalty in current students and alumni. It improves student life and the overall quality of the ‘College experience’.

Colleges are expensive, but it’s an investment. It is an investment in your future – in yourself – whether you’re attending to improve your market value, to hone your intellectual, or improve your social skills. The more prestigious the university becomes, the more professors, athletes and students they attract. It allows the administration to be more exclusive in their selection, allowing them to choose the best students – the ambitious, the qualified, not the ones using college as an interlude between high school and life. We have a ridiculous advantage over other colleges – we live in America. The national consensus is that we live in a tropical paradise.

All the administration needs to do is to let America know FIU exists. Let it be known that going to college in Miami doesn’t have to cost your money, and it’s easier, yet more expensive method of reaching voters. Record breaking investments in Internet operations are expected. Every nominee has posted video taped speeches on his or her web site. Former Senator John Edwards (D-NC) already spent close to $500,000 on his Internet campaign, according to the Washington Post.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Should FIU renovate the football stadium?

• Yes – football should be a top priority!  
• No – we don’t need to. It’s a waste of resources.

Send your letters to:
Letters to the Editor must be dropped off at GC 210 at University Park, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beaconopinion@yahoo.com. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.
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YOUNG ADULTS CONSIDER COSTLY, RISKY SURGERIES

EDDITH SEVILLA
BBC Asst.

Growing up, FIU alumna Jessica Lopez was not too fond of the birthmark on her forehead. “I was a little bothered by it because a lot of people always asked me what it was,” Lopez said.

When she had the birthmark on her forehead removed four years ago, she didn’t have to spend a single dollar. “The insurance covered it because it was really a medical procedure,” Lopez said. “The doctor wanted to do a biopsy to make sure it wasn’t cancerous so it was removed.”

With the popularity of cosmetic surgery among our generation, some have found that plastic surgery and similar procedures come with a significant cost. According to statistics posted on the American Society of Plastic Surgeons website, Americans spent approximately $9.4 billion dollars on surgical and minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in 2005.

“I would consider plastic surgery if I had the money to do it. I would get my nose done and I would get rid of this mark,” says Dorca Castillo, an assistant manager at a private medical facility, while pointing at a dark spot on her lower lip.

Because of the demand for beauty and youth among men and women, there are now numerous alternatives to surgery. Botox, Restylane, permanent makeup and injections to dissolve fat are some of the services available to those who may not want to go under the knife.

Castillo, who had her eyebrows permanently tinted four years ago, goes back to get them redone every few years because of a childhood accident.

“Don’t do it to follow what the media says [about beauty],” she said. “Do it to cover up a scar that resulted from a fall as a kid because I didn’t get stitches as I should have. I also barely have eyebrow hairs and, in my opinion, eyebrows have high value on a woman’s face.”

With the media saturating a perfect image of what the female body should look like, some people such as Dionne Stephens, associate chairperson of the FIU Psychology Department, believe that women associate popularity and success with society’s ideals of beauty, especially the women who live in Miami.

“Physical attractiveness has been identified as an important measure when looking at idealized women,” Stephens said. “Our popularity and success is closely associated with our ability to meet society’s beauty ideals. Miami, in fact, is one of the most popularized cities for having beautiful, young, sexy women. It is of no surprise the show ‘Nip/Tuck’ is based here.”

However, alternative facilities, such as Radiance Medspa in Miami, promote the importance of health by offering non-invasive beauty procedures for both men and women.

“If you see the movement from the last 20 to 30 years, people are looking after themselves – they want to look better and they want to feel better, too,” says spa owner Dipak M. Parekh. “So those movements really started in this country and I think it’s a good thing. If you look at the smoking rates in the older population it’s going down so I believe as the younger population follows suit.”

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– Lower body lift /$6,425
– Cellulite treatment /$127
– Facelift /$4,822
– Liposuction /$2,223
– Laser hair removal /$428

**National Averages provided by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons

Outsider

finds joy as ‘rock star’

He can’t play an instrument or carry a tune, but Brian Ottenthal is a rock star.

His figure is instantly recognizable as he struts his way through his alma mater, the University of Florida: a lanky frame topped by an excess of frizzy curls; buggy eyes behind rimless covered shades; shoes splattered with marker doodles.

Wherever he goes, students stop him to find out what his plans for the night are, who he’s currently dating or why he chose to wear that pink beanie.

“Wow, I don’t even know who that was,” Brian mutters after his latest female fan pays tribute near the UF library’s exit.

Since he moved to Gainesville in 2003, the wiry Jewish boy from South Florida has done everything from designing his own clothes to reporting for various local newspapers to deejaying parties. In his free time, Brian likes to travel, taking whatever he calls “Weekend Adventures” around Central and North Florida and sometimes out of state.

If he’s not volunteering at a shelter, plugging in radio or hosting a mock talk show, Brian likes to watch rock documentaries or concert films of artists as varied as The Sex Pistols, Roy Orbison or Janis Hendrix.

And everywhere he goes, he is recognized, and if not loved, at least admired. “I’m looking for something really big,” he says of his goal in life.

Brian’s been saying this for a long time now. We’ve been friends since high school and have continued throughout college – I even make it a tradition to visit him in Gainesville at least once a semester.

But my memories of high school Brian aren’t the same as the ones I’ve kept from my many UF trips. Back then, he was just another Broward kid dreaming of escaping suburban life. Tony Livesey, a high-school friend, says Brian “just seemed like a dude who didn’t want to be who he was.”

When we talk now, Brian still talks about his past as if he’s still “that guy in the last row of the class who wasn’t paying attention in class and was too busy hanging out with his, you know, friends.”

But he’s not the same guy, I get the feeling, and if Brian doesn’t get the feeling, he’s not the guy I knew. The change is subtle. We’ve grown apart, but I can see that Brian has come a long way.

‘To me, Brian is still that guy who locked the fire alarm at 3 a.m. in high school to stop my friends and I from being late to class,’ my friend Tony Livesey tells me when we talk about Brian.

‘He was always very eccentric and spontaneous, Brian the kid who would have a funky light on his head and a spot of dirt on his face and be the one who was always getting into trouble’

But Brian insists that he’s changed and that he’s happier now.

But I think of Brian as the same guy. He’s just a little more popular these days.
Comedic actor discusses serious role in upcoming film

GEORGE ANDERSON JR. Asst. Life! Editor

Actor Kal Penn of Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle fame sat down for a roundtable interview with college reporters at the Intercontinental Hotel in Los Angeles to talk about his latest film, The Namesake, where he plays Gogol Ganguli. The film, which will see limited release in theaters on March 9, The film follows the story of the Ganguli family. Following an arranged marriage in Calcutta, Ashoke (Irrfan Khan) and Ashima Ganguli (Tabu) move to New York, leaving behind one culture for another. As the Gangulis attempt to steady themselves in a new country, Ashima eventually gives birth to two children, Gogol (Kal Penn) and Sonia (Sahira Nair).

The family’s struggles with a new culture are blatantly apparent, foregoing any subtlety. In one scene following their son’s birth, Ashima and Ashoke are informed that the baby cannot leave the hospital without being named. Unlike their past culture where a baby can be named years after its birth, Ashima and Ashoke encounter an immediate and unexpected decision. They choose both a pet name and a “good name”: Gogol and Nikhil, respectively; the names are based on Ashoke’s favorite author, Nikolai Gogol.

As Ashima Ganguli, Tabu delivers the film’s strongest and heart-wrenching performance. Her portrayal of a mother trying to find stability in a new country while attempting to keep touch with her children is honest and believable. Similarly, Irfan Khan does a convincing job supporting and understanding Tabu’s character. The marketing and screening of the film may have you think, Kal Penn’s Gogol is not the main character of the movie – he doesn’t even appear until the film’s second half. Still, Penn and Ashoke’s White Castle, Van Wilder delivers in one of his first dramatic roles. While retaining some of his trademark wit, Penn shows his sensitive (and insensitively) side as his character tries to break away from his family’s Indian culture, showcasing Penn’s versatility.

Although the film has a strong cast and captivating sets (The Namesake was partially shot in Calcutta), the movie has one noticeable fault: it’s rushed. While this may be attributed to trying to capture all of the detail in the source material, it can be somewhat confus- ing for the viewer. Kal Penn’s love interests Maxine (Jacinda Barrett) and Moushumi (Zuleikha Robinson) leave abruptly and are never heard of again. With each member of the Ganguli family having his or her own little story, the hurried pace can make it hard for some to keep track of everything.

Nevertheless, the film is enjoyable and, with such great acting performances, it’s hard not to feel for the family – you’ll laugh, cry and smile as the Ganguli family experiences life’s turns. The Namesake, at its core, shows us that family is paramount in a world where everything else is uncertain.

Q: What was it like for you growing up Indian-American in New Jersey? Did you face any stereotypes?

Yeah, thanks to the genius of “The Simpsons” and Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, it took a little bit of work to explain to people that I am neither a cartoon character nor a monkey brain-eating creature.

Q: How did the Ganguli family in the film compare to your own family?

They’re similar and different. I’m a first-generation, similar to Gogol – my parents moved here in the late ’60s. I guess the differences are probably that Ashoke is a professor and Ashima is a housewife; my dad’s an engineer and my mom got her degree in chemistry so they both work – that’s a little bit different.

In the book, they grow up outside of Boston and I grew up outside of New York, and that’s another similarity to the movie.

Q: A lot of the stuff that happens in the final product of the movie doesn’t involve you at all. There’s a good chunk of the movie that involves the parents. How did you fit your character into the larger scheme of things?

I think you just do your job as your character, it automatically fits in. If you’re in a scene where you don’t say anything, don’t focus on what other people are saying, you focus on exactly why you’re in that scene to begin with, sort of like in real life. Anything from taking a drink of water to scratching your head while walking down the street, there’s a reason why you’re doing all of that – it’s the same when you’re acting. Every action has a justification.

Q: What was it like filming in India? Have you been there before?

I had been there when I was five, but I don’t remember any of it. It was intense. [The Taj Mahal] is a beautiful, beautiful building. I really enjoyed Calcutta. Contrary to the bulls—in movies like City of Joy, it’s a very clean city. They have a communist government, so their literacy rate is astronomical—it’s almost at 100%. The treatment of men and women is a lot less disparate than other places. Because their literacy rate is so high, they post—granted, it’s a government newspaper—the newspaper on the street corners so that everyone has access to the news. It’s a very artistic, very literate, very cultural and clean city.

Q: Did you think that the adaptation from the novel to the script is accurate? Was there anything changed in the movie form?

I think so because the themes of the novel are the same as the themes of the film. It ends with the feeling of family and the feeling of hope. Regionally, it takes place in Cambridge—outside of Boston versus the film adaptation, which is New York—that’s number one. There are also chunks of it missing like when he goes to Yale and grad school.

Q: The film is about the spiritual journey of this character. Did you take anything away from your character such as connecting or finding yourself? Did the movie challenge you to look into that at all?

Not really, but it depends on what you mean. On one hand, not really. On the other hand, it’s my favorite film I’ve worked on so far. We’d work 18-hour days and I would be exhausted and go home, and I couldn’t wait to get up in the morning to do it all over again. In that sense, I was like, ‘Okay, so it doesn’t all have to be like Van Wilder’. Can I actually look forward to going to work in the morning and feel really passionate about what I was doing.

Q: Can’t you compare them as immediately because it’s a supporting character versus a fully fleshed out character. If I had not done Van Wilder, I would have never done The Namesake. Van Wilder was one of the reasons I got Harold and Kumar because the studios want an actor who has done something in the past so they know their investment will be recouped eventually and that an actor is not going to screw it up.

Q: How does it feel to kind of pave the way for Indian-American actors in the entertainment industry?

It would be great if the way was already paved. I hope more people enter the field. It’s weird to think about that. I think Mira paved the way for that— I don’t credit myself at all. There are a whole number of South Asian actors and actresses who are trained and studied in it and went to theatre school and are living in New York and L.A. and Chicago doing things. I don’t think commercial success should be used to measure whether people are enter- ing the industry.

Q: Anybody you’d like to work with?

I’d like to work with Natalie Portman. I don’t know— you know how you think about this stuff all the time and sometimes it just hits you— MySpace me and I’ll get back to you.

** For the full interview and more Life! articles, check out The Beacon website at www.beacon- newspaper.com
Similar friends share different visions of rock’n’roll life

ROCK, page 7

I me out of the car on a rainy day after I’d told him how I hate getting wet. While people admire his unique style and confidence, I think of the guy who keeps an emotional distance from his family and friends, complaining only when the girl he’s willing to break his heart for won’t break hers.

Behind the wicked smile and radiantly-dyed hair, I can see the convinced atheist struggling with what he calls his “Jewishness,” only recently trying to understand the religion and culture he has denied for most of his life.

So how did my insecure high school pal become this boisterous stranger with a rock’n’roll gait, and why is it that his transformation unsettles me? Despite our similar interests and goals, our biggest difference is that we’ve come to accept opposite visions of life and our role in it.

While living in Broward, Brian always seemed like a stunned dynamo, biding his time by singing along to David Bowie and Chuck Berry while waiting for his energy to be released. Once he was settled and independent, he let loose and wasted no time in living the kind of life his rock’n’roll heroes had sung about. He never waited for the adventure to happen because he was the one in control.

Although I can agree that life is full of wonderful perils and adventure, I haven’t been as keen as Brian to take hold of them. Where he throws himself into life like a drunken star falling beautifully into a clear pool, I just stand and let it wash over me like an uncomfortable shower. I don’t search for life – life comes after me and does whatever it wants.

Right now, Brian is deeply involved with his girlfriend, is getting ready to graduate and will soon be joining the Peace Corps. He is also rarely haunted by the thoughts of death and anxiety that often plague adolescents, two things he is grateful to live without.

Brian believes in the individual and is fascinated by the thought that men and women can rise out of the mass and wield enough influence to change those masses. He may even hope that one day he’ll be one of those individuals.

“You have to find whatever it is that you can find the most fulfilling and do it, and if for some reason that changes, you do something else, and you do that ’til you die,” Brian said.

I’m glad he’s been able to find a vision of life where happiness is all that matters. That may not be my vision, but that’s why I keep searching through this column.

I only slightly regret that, while Brian rose to the stage and became a rock star, I’ve been left in the stands.

Join The Beacon as it searches for the answers to “The Meaning of Life” every other Monday.

Various products alternatives to plastic surgery

SURGERIES, page 7

“Various products alternatives to plastic surgery think they are conscious about their health but also about looking good and feeling good.” With visibly smooth skin, Parekh admitted to using the products offered in his office.

But with all the alternatives available, some would still consider being cut up. “I don’t have the time or the will to exercise,” Castillo said. “Dieting won’t let me enjoy the tastes of foods. With surgery, I’ll just get cut and that’s it.”

Stephens advises that clarification on surgical procedures and its consequences are important for those seeking this measure.

“The key is to consider why we are doing something,” Stephens said. “With any kind of medical procedure, a person needs to be clear on all the positive and negative things that could happened.”

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The Beacon – February 26, 2007

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Women’s softball fails to record first win of season

SOFTBALL, page 12

The Golden Panthers couldn’t capitalize on their first hit as Penna struck out the next batter she faced and then forced Lauren Spiers into a groundout.

Things began to unravel for the Golden Panthers in the seventh inning as Monique White fumbled a line drive.

With runners on first and second, Cardinals’ freshman Alissa Haber singled to center field prompting FIU centerfielder Deomni Murray to make a hard throw to home plate, to keep another run from scoring.

“For that’s not that surprising, I know it kind of sounds mean, but we expect her to do that,” coach Kim Grydir said. “She’s that good. We get used to seeing that from her.”

Beyond Murray’s defense, the rest of the Golden Panther defense was stout as it forced the Cardinals to leave seven base runners stranded.

In the bottom of the seventh inning, senior catcher Tabitha Embry hit a double to right field, but the Golden Panthers couldn’t score the tying run as Penna struck out Rodriguez for the last out of the game.

“It’s not disheartening, considering the way our season has been going so far,” Houck said. “A [1-0] loss is actually a major step up, especially against a good team like Stanford.”

### STANFORD 1, FIU 0

Following the lopsided loss to Texas Tech, the Golden Panthers had the misfortune of going against Stanford sophomore pitcher Missy Penna, who has recorded 10 or more strikeouts in four games this season.

Her counterpart, Houck, gave up one earned run and seven hits in the loss.

The Miami native added one more to her list – striking out 14 Golden Panthers in a pitchers duel against FIU’s Kerri Houck.

“I just tried to focus tonight,” Penna said. “I was just trying to mix it up with the drop, the rise and the curve.”

“I was just trying to mix it up with the drop, the rise and the curve.”

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[Another advertisement is present, which is not directly related to the sports content and is not included as it has no bearing on the discourse.]
Golden Panther hockey club heading to playoffs

HOCKEY, page 12

limited to just one game this season. Despite his injury, he is part of the club and has bonded with his teammates.

“We spend so much time together that we become interested in each other’s lives,” Hernandez said.

Hernandez supports his goalies and watches his goalie counterparts – senior Carlos Novoa and freshman Juan Vinueza – perform on the ice.

The duo has combined for 442 saves out of 524 opportunities in 20 games.

“We can either make or break the game,” Novoa said. “The goalie can be the hero or the villain. I think being the hero is more forward Alex Galindo (9-19, 7-10) Yolanda Jones, who scored 27 points. The Golden Panthers weren’t able to contain ULL’s (22-7, 13-4) Yolanda Jones, who scored 27 points.

The women will play the first round Sun Belt tournament game Feb. 26; the opponent and site are yet to be determined.

-Compiled by Charlie Grau

BASKETBALL REPLAY

Men’s basketball wins final home contest

FIU (MEN) 71, ULL 68

Despite losing, sophomore forward Alex Galindo with 5:42 left in the first half, the Golden Panthers (12-15, 9-9) in the last game, scoring 11 points. The Golden Panthers weren’t able to contain ULL’s (22-7, 13-4) Yolanda Jones, who scored 27 points.

The women will play the first round Sun Belt tournament game Feb. 26; the opponent and site are yet to be determined.

-Compiled by Charlie Grau

FIU 52

“They’ve played together longer now,” coach Frank Tadeo said. “There’s more chemistry in the team.”

Despite finishing last in the Southeast Regional division with a 4-16 record last year, the coach is confident his players can go from worst in their division to best in the country in one year.

“I’ve never been so excited about a team before,” he said. “I think we’re going to win it all.”

The Beacon – February 26, 2007
www.beaconnewspaper.com
MISS: The Golden Panthers softball team struggled offensively, scoring one run in the two games combined.

ZOSLANSKI, scoring one run in the two games combined.

Asst. Sports Editor

The Golden Panthers’ roller hockey program is ranked No. 6 in the nation out of 174 programs.

However, the program is not considered an official FIU team – only an club.

The hockey club began in 1996 and is now led by one of the club’s founding fathers, coach Frank Tuledo.

“My vision was to create an environment where students have the opportunity to enjoy the sport of hockey and have a place to call their own,” Tuledo said. “We wanted to create a community where people can bond, spend time with each other, and travel together, just like any other team. The Golden Panthers Hockey Club (13-3-4) is ranked sixth in the nation, entering the Southeast regional championship.

None of the games are held in Miami. Games have been held in cities such as Tallahassee and Savannah.

“Now, we travel, we bond, spend time with each other and explore the downtown nightlife together,” sophomore goalie Christopher Hernandez said.

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