SGA still working on fulfilling its 2007-2008 goals

Catherine Kaiman, Staff Writer

Although the Student Government Council at University Park has completed seven of its 12 goals for the 2007-2008 academic year, SGC-UP, at the Biscayne Bay Campus has fulfilled three of its seven goals.

“Is that all they haven’t been completed, it’s just that the environment is at the forefront of our goals,” Cassandra Andrade, SGC-BBC vice president, said. “The team effort with the faculty and students has helped make ‘going green’ a lot easier.”

SGC-BBC has been dedicated to completing its goal of making BBC more environmentally friendly by appointing David Fonseca the Environmental Affairs and Community Relations director, Andrade said.

Andrade said SGC-BBC is dedicated to completing its goal of making BBC more environmentally friendly by making BBC a ‘greener campus,” Andrade said. “David is very passionate about the environment and it’s important for our future and to decrease the damage that we are doing.”

BBC Council members have installed water-saving showerheads in the Bay Vista residence hall and have hosted Day at the Bay, an environmental awareness event where participants cleared the bay on the campus. Fonseca also serves on the President’s Climate Committee, which allows SGC-BBC to have a voice in environmental decisions made by the administration.

With Marbely Hernandez, SGC-UP president, serving on the President’s Climate Committee, SGC-UP prefers not to start any green initiatives on its own. They want to wait until administration looks into the environment and makes a plan for the future.

It’s not that they haven’t been completed, it’s just that the environment is at the forefront of our goals.”
Students, staff share complaints

Bravo said.

Senior Javier Rivas, vice president of the FIU branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, described what it’s like to be at CEAS after dark.

“Without air conditioning, lights flickering, and no power in the outlets, my engineering skills are really put to the test when I try to study in the Panther Pit lounge late at night,” Rivas said.

Ashley Andersen, a biomedical engineering graduate student, agrees.

“It is creepy, especially at night. I don’t feel safe walking to my car after the lights have turned off,” Andersen said.

Chris Rego, a senior majoring in civil engineering, expressed concern that students will be distracted studying when the recreation area is under construction.

“Temptation: the unvailing of the Panther Tram and a maintenance item should have been repaired, any general concerns are negotiated with a construction manager and will be forwarding those complaints to FEMA for funding,” Santana-Brago said.

While roof damage has been repaired, any general maintenance items should be reported to Work Management in order to initiate repairs, according to Santana-Brago.

Most of engineering classes are held in CEAS, especially during the last two years of classes, which deal exclusively with engineering and engineering-related topics. Another concern is over how these students want to have a classic college life experience but CEAS lacks ready access to social and academic events hosted on other campuses.

Some complained that information about job and career opportunities are restricted, as the Career Services office located at CEAS has been vacant for a year since its former career advisor resigned. Most job fairs occur at UP, and Villar remarked that “industry professionals who do visit CEAS are not impressed by the facilities.”

Lentroy Jones, director of Career Services at UP, contends that the position is in the process of being filled.

“It is tough to fill these positions,” Jones said. “I am extremely committed to finding the best individual.”

According to Jones, a national search for a replacement has not yielded the perfect candidate yet. In the meantime, a two-month University-wide hiring freeze earlier this year didn’t help, although for several months other Career Services employees have rotated worked at CEAS.

Despite many problems, the engineering community is proud of ongoing research projects, including the “Wall of Wind,” which simulates hurricane force winds to test structural integrity.

“The whole environment is not good for learning,” said Luis Alonso, president of the Biomedical Engineering Society. “It is not on the same page as UP.”

“Facilities bring in student life and involvement, and at [CEAS] we are lacking,” Meyer said.

Meyer insists that SGA does not ignore CEAS; SGC-UP held its most recent council meeting there.

Associate Dean David Shen is glad that students are trying to get changes made around campus.

“Of course we want more,” Shen said in reference to the parking situation as well as lack of landscaping.

Spirituality program inspired by Dalai Lama

studies by suggesting we try to develop a compassionate ethics in our relationships with nature and with one another,” Plisko said.

One required foundation course for the certificate program is Meditation and Mystical Traditions, which Sarah Dubitsky, director of the Center for the Study of Spirituality’s Undergraduate Certificate Program and adjunct in the Psychology Department, recommends for students planning a career in psychology.

She said the course “would be an adjunct to one’s own practice or in aiding their client’s growth.”

There will also be courses offered in the program that will focus on an array of disciplines, such as cuisine and travel.

“Cuisine is connected to spirituality as people are becoming more and more conscious of their role in nature and as environmental and health issues are arising,” Katz said.

“Also, the oldest form of tourism in the world is pilgrimage, which of course is a spiritual endeavor,” Katz said.

Today, we are seeing more and more travel programs with a spiritual focus — whether to India, Israel, Japan or the Andes.”

As funds become available through grants and donations, Katz says that he and his department plan to expand the program with new courses in this discipline, from literature to psychology to hospital- ity management, within the next two years.

The program has received more than three dozen student inquiries so far, even though it has not yet been publicized.

For more information on the new curriculum, e-mail Spirituality@fi u.edu.
Marine life sparks eco-friendly artist to submerge artwork

CATHERINE KAIMAN
Staff Writer

Ross Power, an environmental artist, has loaned Biscayne Bay Campus sculptures for at least the next five years. Previously displayed adjacent to the construction of the Student Recreation Center, the four stainless steel sculptures were installed during a ceremony, held Nov. 16, on the bay side of the Marine Sciences building.

“Having sculptures installed along the bay was not a small undertaking because of the hurricane codes that had to be approved,” said Julissa Castellanos, director of operations for BBC’s Office of the Vice Provost.

The four sculptures along the bay pathway are Future Wave,” “No Turning Back” “Focus” and “Reflective Man.” Each are more than seven feet tall.

As an environmental artist, Power utilizes the environment as his medium to create environmentally conscious sculptures. “I established myself in 1972 in California and began creating metal sculptures from places like the Hyatt Regency to the Metropolitan Goldwyn Meyer,” Power said. “I quickly became disinterested in that way are Future Wave,” “No Turning Back” “Focus” is one of seven sculptures that will be permanently submerged in an undecided underwater location.

“By having these sculptures under the ocean forever, there is a marriage of art and science and that is what brings FIU [and] [I] together,” Power said. “We are a creative society and we need to enlighten and give back to our environment which is being abused. We need to make [the environment] even better than it was before we abused it.”

“Future Wave” and “No Turning Back” were submerged in the ocean for one year.

In that one year, Power was inspired by how marine life interacted with his art.

He wanted his design to move with the marine life and remain forever in the sea, according to Power’s Web site, www.rosspower.com.

“Focus” is one of seven sculptures that will be permanently submerged in an undecided underwater location.

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Despite the sculptures’ installation in a hurricane prone area, BBC’s administration is pleased with the relationship that now exists between Power and FIU, said Rebecca Dinar, outreach coordinator for the Vice Provost’s office.

“The Office of the Vice Provost is very thankful to Power for his help in making BBC more aesthetically pleasing and incorporating art, science and marine life into our curriculum,” Dinar said. “[We] hope that this inspires the members of the community.”

Power is equally pleased with his sculptures’ enrollment of the BBC community.

“I am so thrilled with every single person at FIU,” Power said. “It really feels like a family and we can now embark together on an adventure reaching millions of people.”

SGC-BBC hopes to meet its goals

GOALS, page 1

Many members of the House of Representatives are taking the initiative to get faculty members involved in programing events with students.

“We invite all faculty members and Donors to participate in the friendly Toy Drive competition between the different colleges at BBC,” Andrade said.

The most important goals that SGC-BBC hopes to accomplish within their administration is finalizing the restaurants and vendors that will provide the new cafeteria more food options, ensure funding for the Aquatic Center’s repairs and to continue listening to student’s input for the vacant space on the Wolfe University Center’s third floor.

“Some students have expressed a desire for a media room or extra leisure space on the third floor, but we really have to wait until the cafeteria is opened to see what we will put up there,” Andrade said.

SGC-UP and SGC-BBC both agree that their individual campuses need to strengthen ties with the surrounding community.

The goal of opening an entrance to BBC from 135th Street will not be completed during the tenure of the current SGC-BBC administration.

“Many have tried to increase our community awareness with the city of North Miami, to let them know [FIU] is here, and we feel that it is dangerous to only have one entrance in and out of the campuses,” Andrade said. “We know this will be a challenging goal to complete.”

With the Fall semester coming to a close, UP council members are very pleased with their accomplishments.

“Half of our goals have already been completed and the rest will be accomplished by Spring or the foundation will be set for the new administration,” Meyer said.

SGC-UP has tried to limit the number of laptop thefts on campus by offering cable locks, while also increasing the number of laptops that are available for students in the Green Library.

Cable locks, which are similar to bike locks, are hooked up to the back of the computer and a stationery desk, prevent someone from stealing a laptop.

SGC-UP has also bought 10 new Dell laptops in hopes of increasing laptop rental availability for students at the library.

A newly completed goal at UP is the Student Recreation Center—a free transportation system for students, from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. The response time is usually between five to ten minutes.

“The Panther Safety Team offers four and six scatter [carts] for students, whether it be to a football game, the recreation center, or just to see a friend,” Meyer said.

One SGC-UP goal that will have its foundations set this year for next year’s council is to carry out the Panther Points system. The system will reward students for attending FIU sporting events, but the prizes and point amounts have yet to be set.

“We want to encourage students to go to sporting events that are usually less popular, and with Panther Points, those events would have a higher point system,” Meyer said.

SGC-UP wants to get more involved with Miami-Dade county’s government and the city of Sweetwater. Starting next semester, SGC-UP plans to attend several Sweetwater city council meetings to ensure their understanding of the community around UP, Meyer said.

Besides their 12 goals, there are other issues SGC-UP plans to address. Cleaning and dredging the lake outside of Gracie’s Grill, possibly restructuring the Student Government Association and the Athletics Partnership Proposal that will ensure students have a chance to utilize the Football Stadium and Pharmed Arena, among other spaces, are issues that have come up throughout the semester.

Andrade believes this year’s SGC-BBC has done a great job.

“We are a great team and people are constantly working above and beyond [their duties],” Andrade said.

AT THE BAY
ART ALONG THE BAY

BENDING OVER BACKWARDS: Environmental Artist Ross Power’s, No Turning Back, on display at Biscayne Bay. The sculpture, along with three others, were installed Nov. 16.

SGC-BBC and SGC-UP both agree that their individual campuses need to strengthen ties with the surrounding community.

“The Offi ce of the Vice Provost is very thankful to Power for his help in making BBC more aesthetically pleasing and incorporating art, science and marine life into our curriculum,” Dinar said. “[We] hope that this inspires the members of the community.”

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NEWSFLASH

Student Leaders speak with Ukranian students

BBC student leaders were invited by the office of Student Affairs and the Ukrainian U.S. Embassy to participate in a video conference call with Ukrainian students on Nov. 16 to discuss current student issues.

As part of International Education Week, held from Nov. 12 to 16, the conference was held at 9:00 a.m. in the Vice Provost’s office in Library conference room 319. Breakfast was provided.

Exhibition to display local African artists’ work

The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, on 21 St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., will host the Unspoken: Reflections on the Middle Passage. In observance of the 200th anniversary of slavery’s abolition, the exhibition will work by Floridian African World artists. The exhibition’s opening reception will be Dec. 5 at 6 p.m. For more information, call 305-919-5521.

Core classes available for Spring 2008

The BBC University Core Curriculum schedule for Spring 2008 has been revealed. Courses in English composition, humanities with writing, quantitative reasoning, the arts, natural sciences, physical sciences, social inquiry and societies & identities will be offered Monday through Friday in blocks from 8:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. Download the compiled list at www.fiu.edu/~bbc/UCCClass.pdf.

Compiled by Susana Rodriguez
GAME OVER

Video game diversions can lead to lower grades, failure

KEVIN CASTRO
Staff Writer

Video games are addictive for a good reason.
In video games you can accomplish tasks impossible to achieve in real life. The other day I assassinated a rich, crooked merchant in Assassin’s Creed, a new game set during the Crusades.

Only in video games can I sneak up on an opponent, chainaw him in half and then launch a grenade at his friend.

But visceral images aside, playing video games obsessively will knock your grade down a couple notches.
From my own personal experience, I used to play video games 70 hours a week, now I play 38 hours a week. I admit I was a bit addicted.

I fell victim to charismatic characters with unbelievably realistic features and witty dialogues, jaw-dropping environments, and storylines that just wouldn’t let me put down the controller.

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Video games took too much of my free time and left no time to study. My grades and, consequently, GPA plummeted.

Enlightened by my academic failure, and attempting to retrieve my once unparalleled GPA from the sewer it crawled into, I became a slave to my studies.
But I did learn my lesson: this foray into failure made me realize how important it is to moderate my gaming activities.

A recent study by the University of Rochester shows that video games can be addictive. The study says that video games provide “a sense of achievement, freedom and even social connectedness.”

I fell victim to charismatic characters with unbelievably realistic features and witty dialogues, jaw-dropping environments, and storylines that just wouldn’t let me put down the controller.

Raul Hernandez, a sophomore explains why most of the gamers at FIU don’t have a 4.0 GPA, “most of the guys here a higher intelligence than they should, but the choose to play video games.”

Another study by two professors working for the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that if you play just 40 minutes of video games for a whole semester, your GPA will be 241 points lower than someone that does not play video games.

Not only does playing video games diminish study time but also the amount of time spent sleeping.

A study from WebMd.com states if you play a video game before bed it will keep you awake long after you turn the game off.

The bright light of a computer or gaming screen may alter the body’s biological clock and suppress the natural production of melatonin; that’s crucial to the normal sleep-wake cycle.

The answer to passing all your classes and avoiding becoming a game video game addict is moderation.

“You know how to balance your life, video games are something on the side; grades are the priority,” said Brian Bonilla, a resident assistant double majoring in criminal justice and psychology.

Even with all of the scientific studies, data and peer accounts students still play more than they should.

“I could pull off a 7.0 GPA if I applied myself as I do with games to school,” said senior Will “The Baddest Man” Allen.

The title was given to him due to his infamous gaming skills playing the video game Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas.

“I could be studying, but I play Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas instead.”

The reason you are here is to graduate, not play games.
Not only do you lose money when re-taking a class, but you also lose valuable time that could be spent working toward a full-time career; and all because you just couldn’t put the controller down.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you think the University is at fault for letting the Engineering Center go unrepaired?

• Yes – The repairs should have been made after Hurricane Wilma, when the damages initially took place.

• No – The process of recovery from storm damage is a gradual one. It’s not unusual for there to be delays in making repairs.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

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.

November 26, 2007

The Beacon – 4

www.beaconnewspaper.com
December cinema rife with comedy, adventure

November 26, 2007

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Big Fish

Band withstands test of time, revives genre

LAUREN AGOSTO
KASSANDRA POOL
Staff Writer

The blinding lights flash on, piercing screams come from the crowd and a rush of adrenaline overpowers the audience as the ska-punk band Reel Big Fish and their fans feed off of each other's energy.

On Nov. 15, RBF performed at Florida Atlantic University and held a local press conference sponsored by The Rock Star Stories, a television program controlled by college and high school students.

Reel Big Fish first formed in 1992 and have continued to entertain crowds by bringing energy and animated personalities into their performances, with a goal of making every show different to win the last.

Current line-up includes: Aaron Barrett, lead vocals and guitar; John Christianson, trumpet and vocals; Derek Gibbs, bass guitar; Scott Klopfenstein, trumpet and vocals; Dan Regan, trombone and vocals; Rylan Stein, xylophone and drums.

Q: Throughout the years, you guys have had such pure lasting power. How were you able to keep up with the changing market and get to where you are today?

A: KLOPFENSTEIN: Pure luck! We also work very, very hard for our live shows. Everyone has different tastes and brings a little something different to the table.

We have the gift of playing music for a living. Through that we bring an entertainer kind of vibe to it.

We came from Ska and Punk Rock, and it's a combination of the music industry as well. We were able to get out of the record label thing just before everybody jumped ship.

Artists are just starting to take back their industry. There has always been a conflict between business people and artists.

You cannot really fault the business people because they are doing what they are supposed to do, make money and find the best way to make profit.

And the artists just want to make music. Technology has really given back to the artist by being able to create their own recordings, upload them on the web, and promote themselves.

Q: What is it like to release your music on your own record label?

A: BARR: Awesome! We didn’t have to wait for a label to approve budget, studio or anything. No pressure only what we considered.

Q: Your new record is self funded, without a label. What was that like?

A: BARR: That meant that we became a fan, I'd say. There was a lot of money, as high as $300,000, and we were like 'it's pretty cool.'

That artist that got music got the reaction from the crowd; got the crowd dancing. Ska music has always existed on this underground level. It's new and exciting and innovative. People who like Ska are open to new experiences from what we see and it's also fun!

Q: Where does your musical inspiration come from?

A: CHRISTIANSON: People express themselves in different ways. Life is mysterious. It's the way we have been able to express the weirdness of life. People do it differently. Sometimes the weirdness is self inflicted.

A: KLOPFENSTEIN: There's a big ska scene in Orange County. We were a weird band; not really knowing what we were doing, playing a lot of shows with ska bands and we were like 'it's pretty cool.'

Q: Any advice for aspiring musicians?

A: BARR: The only way we can continue to make music is if we get paid.

We don't need a lot, but we do need some and if we can cobble together we will be able to push the art form forward.

Q: What is a major label so we never made any money off of record sales?

A: The only way we can get paid is if we get paid. But, it geographically helped us to get to Europe because our records were not distributed there.

BARR: The only way we can continue to make music is if we get paid.

We don’t need a lot, but we do need some and if we can cobble together we will be able to push the art form forward.

STEIN: If someone is gonna download our music for free and it meant they would come to a show and buy a ticket and a t-shirt at the show, I think that would be a good meeting halfway. If it meant that they became a fan, I'd be okay with it.

Q: Any advise for aspiring musicians?

A: CHRISTIANSON: Practice, practice, practice. And when you think you’ve practiced enough, practice some more.
Bell still a Golden Panther fan despite distance

RAJA BELL, page 8

Q: Not only did you have a successful basketball career at FIU, but you also meet a soccer player named Cindy Greenman, whom you later married. What can you tell us about meeting your wife at FIU?

A: It’s a funny story because I met her my first day on campus. I guess it was meant to be. It was something to be said about the athletic program and everyone living in those apartments. They really made it feel like a family atmosphere.

They welcomed me as a transfer student with open arms. It was a great place for young people to meet and start relationships and build on their plans.

Q: After you left FIU in 1999, you were undrafted and seemed to bounce around playing for quite a few teams before you landed in the NBA about a year later. How frustrating were these times and what got you through them?

A: I didn’t know I ever was going to have an opportunity to play in the NBA. That wasn’t my driving force. I just loved to play the game. Every opportunity to play the game, I just took it. It was frustrating when people began to tell me I had a chance and I would knock on the door and it would shut on my face.

What kept me going was the love for the game, not wanting to quit, not feeling like I had shoved the best me on the court, knowing that if someone got a chance to see that, they would be impressed with it.

Q: Since leaving FIU, have you been back to work with the players? Do you still keep up with the FIU basketball team and FIU sports?

A: I will try to outmuscle Hicks, a defensive specialist Chris Galindo did not connect well with it.

The Golden Panthers face a challenge in the form of 6-9 University of South Florida forward Russell Hicks, who weighs 20 pounds less than Gransberry and will need to be patient and time this young season. The Golden Panthers’ main priority is to keep up with the players. Do you still keep up with the players? Do you still keep up with the FIU basketball team and FIU sports?

A: I never had any expectations to win.

Defensive specialist Chris Galindo did not connect well with it.

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the team to an upset, but eventually fell No. 24 DePaul University nearly lead career-high, 30-point performance against by junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson. Her converted 11 3-pointers. a win over Bethune-Cookman, the Bulls presence sets up the perimeter game. In prior players. Panthers will have to defend USF's inte- creating a long run like that, the Golden wins, they have accumulated long runs of have been blowouts. The closest game on Nov. 29 is against the University 22-5 and 18-4 to put their opponents in an games. These days, he can still be found on a basketball court, now only as member of the NBA's Phoenix Suns. Bell came to FIU as a transfer student from the University of Boston. He was an instant success as a Golden Panther and averaging 16.6 points per game in his two years with the team. However, basketball may not even be the number one thing he remembers from his days at FIU. Bell still has connections to FIU and current coach Sergio Rouco. Bell was first coached by Rouco when he was playing AAU basketball high school. "He’s always been a tough competitor. He is a guy who made his living in the NBA as a defensive player," Rouco said. "He is a great alumus. He’s very proud of FIU and he represents us great, so does Carlos [Arroyo]. We are very proud of them and it helps us in recruiting when we have those two guys in the NBA.” FIU will retire Bell’s No. 13 jersey during the team’s Dec. 8 match up against the University of Miami. Due to his NBA schedule, Bell will not be on hand that night, but is still very much a part of the FIU family and even takes classes online as he works toward his bachelor’s degree. Bell’s team, however, was in town Nov. 9 to play the Miami Heat and Bell sat down for an interview with The Beacon about his time at FIU, making it into the NBA, the teams he’s played for and his family life.

RAJA BELL, page 7