Maidique discusses FIU’s future

CHRISTINA VEIGA
Contributing Writer

FIU is facing the best of times and the worst of times according to University President Modesto Maidique.

In his annual Town Hall Meetings on earlier this week, Maidique laid out the positive and the difficulties facing FIU in coming years.

First the good news: Among other things, Maidique cited preliminary accreditation for the College of Medicine, record passing rates on the Statewide Florida Bar Exam and a 20 percent increase in student applications as good signs that FIU is heading in the right direction.

“I think it’s the best of times because we have the best leadership team that we have ever had and it is second to none in the state,” Maidique said.

Yet the worst of times because the budget threat that lies out there is incomparable to the worst we have suffered in the past," Maidique said. The president presented six areas the University will focus on to ensure the positive continues to outweigh the negative at FIU.

“Of course, we also had to contend with the negative,” said the president, adding that the University is facing the best of times and the worst of times.

"As sad as it might seem, the first strategic imperative is to preserve the University basically survive these cuts without damaging [its] integrity," Maidique said.

The current and pending budget cuts are the result of lower than expected tax revenue collected by the state. According to the House Senate Budget Comparison, FIU will need to identify a minimum budget cut of $9.4 million of its $234 million recurring state appropriation. The cuts can go as high as 10 percent – a $23 million reduction for FIU.

The aftershock of measures to manage the budget cuts are already being felt at Florida public institutions. Late last year, the Florida Board of Governors, the governing body will need to identify a minimum budget cut of $9.4 million of its $234 million recurring state appropriation. The cuts can go as high as 10 percent – a $23 million reduction for FIU.

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Jazz performers find fulfillment, opportunities with fellow artists

**BIG BAND, page 1**

The FIU Big Band provides students with exceptional time organizational skills that allows them to have a glimpse of real-world situations. “If they want to be professional musicians, they have to be willing to work very, very hard,” Lussier said.

The FIU Big Band performs more than any other ensemble from FIU. They will perform at FIU’s Concert Hall on March 12 with Jim Snidero, a jazz musician from New York. They will also perform in FIU’s Concert Hall on April 16 with Sandoval.

* For more information contact Lussier at samlussiermusic@yahoo.com or call 305-348-2442.
Maidique tries to balance progress amidst budget cuts

MAIDIQUE, page 1

ors, the governing body of the public universities in the state, instituted the first-ever system-wide freshman cap in order to save money.

“This means that qualified students will be denied admission to FIU,” Maidique said. “The situation is critical.”

As for FIU, the president announced the development of a Budget Stabilization Task Force, freezing admissions for students and non-faculty hiring and the possible elimination of programs to meet the cuts.

“Nothing is off the table, look in every corner and every nook. Sometimes a lot of small things make up a big thing,” said Maidique of the Task Force.

Things may not be so grim for the future of FIU’s newest addition, the medical school, which falls under Madame’s second initiative. Maidique said he received a personal assurance from the Speaker of the House Marco Rubio that the state would find funding for it.

Another point in Maidique’s plan includes increased accountability by improving retention and graduation rates, as well as the addition of more advisors.

Being realistic, Maidique’s fourth point includes readjusting his long-standing goal to become a top 10 public urban research university in the county.

“We’re not going to be able to do that,” Maidique said.

The goal is now to reach top 15 status by the time FIU turns 50 in 2015.

Increasing school spirit is another facet of Maidique’s plan. He plans to do so by is asking for everyone to do their part and be creative in order to save money.

“I was walking on campus at night with my wife when she saw the lights turned on in

The first strategic imperative is to preserve the University to basically survive these cuts without damaging [its] integrity.

The only way to make up for any cuts is to make them short term, like putting off maintenance or not renewing leases, Maidique said.

The last goal presented by the president is to fill the full-time fundraising position of vice-president of advancement, which has been vacant for two years. The vacancy has led to a 30 percent decrease in fundraising, according to a Feb. Miami Herald story.

The president knows that times are difficult and growing FIU’s athletics programs and Greek life, as well as building more dorms and providing more student activities.

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**OPINION**

**CAMPUS GUN CONTROL**

Guns pose extra risks to students’ safety

**BEN F. BADGER JR.**
Asst. News Director

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**BANS ARE NOT THE ANSWER TO PREVENTING SHOOTINGS**

**ERIC M. FELDMAN**
Asst. Opinion Editor

It’s a good feeling to know that no one is walking around school packing heat, thanks to the on-campus gun bans that exist for most colleges and universities in the nation, including Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University.

If a lightening up of the ban would have an effect on potential mass shootings is a complex and emotional debate, but it is fairly clear that a ban cannot keep the guns which people intend to use for harm out of a campus, or any other area where a ban is in effect.

Whether or not you own a gun (and it is a respectable decision to keep them out of your home, especially if children are present), you would probably not put a sticker on your window saying “This Home Not Protected by Firearms.”

On-campus bans announce that those with malicious or psychotic intents, who may well not care about dying in the process, will at least not meet much resistance in carrying out their chaotic task.

There seems to be no legal basis for suspending the constitutionally given right to bear arms, even for those with concealed-carry permits, within the boundaries of campuses.

Mass shootings are not the only things against which college students have to fear, or defend against. On Feb. 15, a female University of Nevada student’s body was found in a field after she was abducted from campus.

Ideally, law enforcement professionals would be the first responders to emergencies on campus, and the only ones using lethal force to do so.

FIU has exhibited great strides in preparing the campus for emergencies, including beginning to install emergency telephones in every classroom. However, a Beacon editorial revealed that on some shifts, Public Safety can have as little as two officers on duty, raising questions about their ability to respond to an incident, be it a terrorism-related attack or an under-the-radar abduction or sexual assault.

The impulse to ban guns from campus also stems from the misconception that it being legal to carry a handgun equates to it being legal to use a handgun.

The Web site for the Florida agency responsible for licensing citizens to carry a concealed weapon makes it expressly clear that a life or serious bodily injury must be at risk before a concealed weapon can be used, or even displayed, and that anyone using a weapon in an unwarranted way would be punishable within the law.

Students having weapons on campus could make a volatile situation worse,” King said.

Regardless of my disdain for them, the Second Amendment essentially guarantees the right to own guns. Thankfully, they are banned on college campuses across the country, with Utah being the only exception.

But after the recent string of school shootings, that are no longer limited to primary and secondary institutions, some states have been trying to push legislation that would lift the ban that prevents college students from bringing a gun on campus.

Generally speaking, college students have an extra factor of stress that the rest of the population doesn’t. Adding guns to the mix is just asking for trouble.

The logic behind letting students carry guns on campus is for self defense. If they have a gun they can protect themselves from a would be attacker – or in a more extreme situation – stop someone who is on a shooting spree.

According to Bill King chief of Public Safety, students are generally not trained to use firearms.

“Students having weapons on campus could make a volatile situation worse,” King said.

In addition to the added risk factor, King pointed out that securing weapons is a another key issue, considering the high theft rate on campus.

“Just think of the number of weapons that would be stolen,” King said.

On the topic of securing guns, what would happen if one was set off accidentally?

When a person gets shot, they are lucky if the bullet goes through them, missing vital organs and bones. In most cases those vital organs get hit or the bullet ricochets off bone.

Guns on campus is more absurd when you consider the crime trends.

According to the USA Department of Justice’s Web site, nonfatal firearm related crimes have been declining since 1994 before slight spike in 2005. While, homicide rates had also been at their lowest rate ever in 2005.

So the data indicates that we are actually becoming a safer country overall. Of course there is still a need to be vigilant when it comes to your safety, but simply throwing guns into the equation does not solve things, not when there are so many alternatives.

If you really feel like you have to protect yourself, there are plenty of nonlethal measures you could take. To name a few: pepper spray, tasers and walking in groups.

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Popular energy drinks could prove hazardous

ELYSE COLEMAN
Staff Writer

Junior Mercy Jimenez rushed to the back of PantherStop where the beverages are kept. She picked up two drinks, a can of Rockstar and a Rockstar Juiced Mango.

“I don’t always drink Rockstar,” she said. “I also like Red Bull and Enviga.”

After grabbing her drinks, Jimenez walked hurriedly around the store picking up snacks before making her way to the register.

“I only drink these on school days, not on weekends,” she said. “I need them so I can stay awake and focus while I study.”

Jimenez is not the only college student hooked on drinks promising a sudden surge in vitality.

A study released in March 2007 conducted by the Mintel International market research group found that 34 percent of energy drink consumers are between the ages of 18 and 24. That is a large portion of the audience for these drinks.

“People come in to buy energy drinks very frequently, especially Red Bull, Rockstar and Full Throttle,” said David Malagon, a sophomore.

Malagon is a sales clerk at PantherStop.

“We constantly have to refill the Red Bulls,” he said.

Red Bull’s Web site provides a list of benefits, claiming that it “improves performance, increases concentration and reaction speed, increases endurance and stimulates metabolism.”

“I used to be completely addicted to Red Bulls,” said Orane Carney, a junior. “At the time I was working three jobs while going to school.”

One energy beverage, Enviga, even claims to promote weight loss. A press release issued by The Coca-Cola Company on Oct. 11, 2006 describes it as “proven to burn calories.”

“I heard if you drink three cans of Enviga a day you’ll lose weight, so I started drinking it,” said Natasha Caplan, a junior. “It’s good if it’s cold but downright painful if it’s warm. You kind of OD on caffeine.”

December 2007 by the Packaged Facts industry today is worth over $5.4 billion. “People come in to buy energy drinks very frequently, especially Red Bull, Rockstar and Full Throttle,” said David Malagon, a sophomore.

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Technology eases college life

COMMUTING DAILY TO AND FROM SCHOOL while loaded with 12 to 15 credits, active (-ish) memberships in several clubs and loans hanging overhead make students’ lives difficult.

Where’s the time for food – much less sleep – when papers and exams are eating you at? All the studying and worrying can take a toll on days where every minute counts.

Fortunately, there are ways you can reclaim time for yourself by taking advantage of free online services and programs that help manage your school life.

Start taking stock of how you spend your time each day with www.twitter.com, a Web site that asks you to answer “what are you doing?” throughout the day – known as twittering – in 140 characters or less.

You can create a free account, and you have the option to keep your twitter private or you can add them to the public timeline along with other users’ twitters. Whether you decide to keep your business yours or unleash your inner exhibitionist, the most important twitters you’ll want to make are when you arrive on campus, how long you stay and when you leave and get home.

By keeping track of the time you spend of and about, you’ll be able to map out how to spend it wisely.

If it took you 20 minutes to get to campus and you live within ten, it’s time to find a new route to school.

Likewise, you can keep track of how you spend time on campus and maximize your schedule for efficiency – such as figuring out whether to spend that hour between classes napping or crashing a club meeting for free food.

Time-consuming group projects can be executed online by using a few of Google’s virtual applications: Groups, Notebook and Docs.

The collaborative nature of these online programs saves the entire group time and money by allowing everyone to work when and where they can effectively without losing their minds trying to match up impossible class schedules to meet up.

Use www.groups.google.com to start a discussion forum for tossing ideas back and forth among your group as well as keeping each other updated with your project.

Together you can start a virtual notebook at www.notebook.google.com to keep collect research together and later share the writing load by using the handy virtual word processor at www.docs.google.com.

To access Google’s services, you’ll first need to sign up for an account using your current email address at the Web site www.docs.google.com. 

Mayo Clinic invites new graduates to embark on an adventure and discover unparalleled opportunities for career mobility and growth. Our hospitals are world-renowned acute care teaching facilities where quality nursing is our tradition and mission.

For the new graduate, we offer clinical and classroom-based orientation to foster professional and personal growth and development. A primary preceptor is assigned to ensure a successful transition from student to professional.

To apply or learn more about nursing opportunities for new graduates at Mayo Clinic, please visit www.mayoclinic.org/jobs-nursing/mn.

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Phone: 800-562-7984
E-mail: nursing.hr.staffing@mayo.edu

Mayo Clinic is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer and educator.
Energy drinks a popular, possibly dangerous option

**DRINKS, page 5**

Have to chug it down.” However, The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) filed suit against Coca-Cola and Nestle on Feb. 1, 2007.

According to the CSPI’s Web site, Nestlé’s study of Enviga was conducted over 72 hours among 31 individuals, none of whom were overweight. Consequently, the study does not prove that Enviga supports weight loss. The CSPI also claims that Nestlé’s study was previously discredited by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity. The suit has yet to go to trial.

“Energy drinks won’t harm most people, but you shouldn’t drink them if you’re exercising or if you’re prone to seizures or have a heart arrhythmia,” said Marraccini. “However, it’s not proven that they give you a real energy boost. That may just be a perceived rush from between energy drinks and epilepsy.” At least four people have reported experiencing recurrent seizures after heavy consumption of energy drinks. In all cases, once the individuals abstained from energy drinks, the seizures stopped.

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Future looks bright despite slow start to season

Thomas expects perfection from his players and even though the team is doing well offensively, he is not going to become complacent.

Thomas will always look for improvement.

After some shaky outings from FIU starting pitchers against USC, the staff bounced back well against Wagner.

Facing a tough opponent to begin the Sun Belt Conference play will be a good barometer for Thomas who admittedly has not seen many Sun Belt teams in action.

However, unless the team’s relief pitching improves miraculously, not much should be expected from this team in transition.

The outlook in the locker room will remain high, though, especially for the future of the program as many people, including Athletic Director Pete Garcia, have put their faith in Thomas to turn the program into the powerhouse it should be — considering it’s located in a hotbed of high school baseball prospects.

It’s a tough task, considering the foundation Thomas was given.

However, it seems he’s up for the challenge because he’s very confident, and he knows what he’s doing. The rest of us will have to hope and see.
After being swept by USC to open the season, then taking three of four games against Wagner, a new era in FIU baseball began to look quite good.

Teams of years past were known for losing to top-tier opponents and then playing well against teams from up north. This year is starting off no differently.

New manager Henry “Turtle” Thomas shouldn’t be expected to turn things around immediately, especially with a team that has one glaring weakness: lack of pitching depth.

After years of poor recruiting and a lack of a real pitching coach since the 2004 season, Thomas and his staff are left with just 10 pitchers, most of whom lack Division I experience, which they can’t be blamed for.

Through the season’s first nine games, the staff has allowed at least nine runs in each of its five losses and in one of the team’s wins.

This is a bad season to lack pitching depth, considering the college baseball season is now shorter than it was in years past. For example, last season started on Feb. 3, and this season started Feb. 22.

That’s three fewer weeks of rest for the pitchers -- and every player on the team for that matter.

With a shorter season, relief pitching becomes increasingly important.

The negatives on this team can easily be blamed on the previous coaching staff, led by former coach Mike Jeffries, who manned the program for 28 years prior to Thomas.

Fortunately for Thomas, his team gives him every chance to be successful.

Senior hurler Allen embraces role of ace

Chris Allen knew he was going to be the team’s No. 1 starter before the season started.

He also knew that as a senior and transfer from Clemson, he would be dependent on to win many games for the Golden Panthers in his final collegiate season.

After allowing only 3.2 innings and allowing ten runs (six earned) and taking his first loss of the season, Allen (1-1) responded with an impressive performance in his second start of the season against Wagner, for his first win of the season.

“I felt pretty good; it was great to get back out there,” Allen said. “I couldn’t wait since my last start to get back out there and put to work some of the things that I worked on during the week.”

In his first game, Allen was throwing the ball up in the strike zone, which led to USC’s offensive barrage.

“The difference was location. I was more down in the zone and got a lot more ground ball outs,” Allen said. “Steve [Stropp] called a great game behind the dish, and Felipe [Suarez] helped me make a couple of big game adjustments that really helped me out.”

Once the Golden Panthers begin conference play, there will be added pressure for him to pitch deeper into games. The team’s shaky bullpen contributes to Allen’s responsibilities as the Golden Panthers’ ace.

Allen is a key part of the starting rotation which also includes sophomore Corey Polizzano and fellow senior Steven Stewart.

Every team that succeeds needs a bona fide ace, and if Chris Allen can fulfill that role, FIU will have one main component needed to succeed, as they begin the conference games which count the most.

BIG CONTRIBUTORS

Senior Raimy Fuentes and sophomore Tyler Townsend have continued to be the most effective batters early on in the season. After the series against Wagner, Fuentes was leading the team with a .471 average with one home run and 16 RBI.

Townsend holds the fourth best average on the team with a .343 but has flashed the power from last year as he has four home runs and 16 RBI in nine games.

UP NEXT

The Golden Panthers head to Alabama for a three-game set against the Troy Trojans in the opening series of Sun Belt Conference play.

It will be their first away series after opening with an 11-game home stand to start the season.

 slugger Away

Golden Panthers’ offense scores 51 runs during series

LUCIA MESSINA Staff Writer

The Florida International (4-5) rebounded from a disappointing 13-1 loss to Florida Gulf Coast University on Feb. 26 by taking three of the four games from the Wagner Seahawks (1-3-1) Feb. 29 thru March 2 at University Park Stadium.

“Every time out I think you relax a little bit more,” coach Henry “Turtle” Thomas said. “Some of these guys are getting their third or fourth time out there which is good. The more times you take the hill, the better you feel about things.”

If not for the bullpen’s late collapse in the third game of the series, FIU would have swept the Seahawks as they blew an 11-6 lead en route to a 13-11 loss.

“We are still trying to figure it out. Five days from now we’ll be playing conference games,” Thomas said. “We’ll find out a little bit more about those guys in the next couple of days.”

The Golden Panthers’ offense was active as FIU scored 51 runs while also allowing two runs (none earned) in his first win of the season. He allowed five hits while striking out eight.

After trailing 2-0 early on, FIU responded with an 11-0 loss.

Junior catcher Steven Stropp led the FIU offense through the season’s opening series by pitching a solid 5.2 innings. He allowed four earned on five hits, all of which came in the sixth inning. He also struck out eight and walked two.

Senior Carlos Martinez earned the save after pitching 3.1 innings of scoreless relief.

The Golden Panthers led 11-0 by the fourth inning and never kept it close. Ryan Modlica led the way going 3-for-5 with a grand slam and six RBI.

Senior John Peika and freshman Anthony Iozza also went deep for FIU.

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LUCA MESSINA Staff Writer

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