### Students show up, speak out

**GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR.**
Lifefile Editor

For two hours on April 14, a section of the Graham Center Ballrooms seemed more like a ninja convention than a town hall meeting.

Dozens of headband-wearing students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and others attended the meeting to support their respective schools, which they feel are threatened by FIU’s state-mandated budget cuts.

Supporters of the Center for Labor Research and Studies carried a handmade sign in front of the ballroom’s stage reading “Save the Labor Center.”

Similarly, SJMC students with headbands reading “SIMC Rocks” prepared their own defense during the meeting’s Q&A section, citing the School of Journalism and Mass Communications’ reputation for producing Hispanic journalists.

At the meeting, University President Modesto Maidique, Provost Ronald Berkman and Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez proposed a three-year budget plan detailing how FIU will survive pending budget cuts at a second town hall meeting on April 14.

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### TOUGH TIMES:
**University President Modesto Maidique, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez and Executive Vice President and Provost Ronald Berkman take turns answering questions during Monday’s Town Hall meeting.**

**CHRISTINA VEGA**
News Director

Top University officials presented a contentious three-year plan detailing how FIU will survive pending budget cuts at a second town hall meeting on April 14.

University President Modesto Maidique, Executive Vice President and Provost Ronald Berkman and Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez presented tiered approaches explaining which areas of the University will be most affected by the cuts of up to $35 million.

All emphasized that none of the plans will be finalized until the Faculty Senate, Budget Stabilization Taskforce and Board of Trustees review them and give ultimate approval.

“What we are going to discuss and put on the table today are not decisions that have been made,” Berkman said. “I felt, and the president felt, that it is better as a community to share with you what we are thinking and what our recommendations are for closing the gap, rather than leave everyone in the dark.”

Opposition arose when Berkman took the stage to detail the four-tier system used to determine the importance of colleges, schools, institutes and departments. Berkman announced that all centers and institutes have been granted level four status, with many being closed, restructured or pressured to find alternate sources of funding.

Representatives from the Center for Labor Research and Studies, which faces restructuring, were present with signs to protest their position as a low priority to the University.

Tier three colleges and schools include the College of Law, College of Education, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Engineering, School of Business, International Studies and Architecture and the Arts.

“There has been a push by the provost to eradicate the school of mass communication,” said Roberto Moreno, senior. “Sir, all I have to say is ‘how dare you’!”

Sanchez was also met with backlash in response to her four-tiered approach, with vehicles, mail/duplicating/printing, e-mail support, construction management and real estate development cited as level four priorities.

Various mail center employees were present to protest the possible outsourcing of their department. They encouraged Sanchez to look within for creative solutions for saving their department.

“You have the talent here. There is too much politics,” said Urias Martinez, a mail room employee.

**JUST THE FACTS:** President Modesto Maidique presents a PowerPoint presentation on the upcoming budget cuts.

### REACTIONS, page 2

**Maidique’s blame game unfounded**

Maidique blamed Medicare and Medicaid for straining the national budget, and the crippled housing market in Florida for the state budget deficit of nearly $5 billion.

“Since construction and housing are such important elements of our economy, if those sectors have a cold, Florida gets a pneumonia. And when Florida gets pneumonia, we, who are funded primarily through the state of Florida, experience a real problem,” Maidique said.

Maidique presented his plan for “FIU 3.0,” which detailed a three-year budget plan.
Centers, institutes at most risk for future cuts

CHARLIE GRAU
Editor in Chief

Centers and institutes find themselves on the chopping block while the University figures out how to combat a budget crisis for the next fiscal year.

At a town hall meeting on April 14 in the great Center Ballrooms, Executive Vice President and Provost Ronald Berkman said that the University started taking a look at the dollar savings that are in centers and institutes.

In order to help combat the 4 to 7 percent budget cut the University is facing, various centers and institutes would be closed down or consolidated.

According to Berkman, closing the centers and institutes would help save state funds which would in turn be used to hire more faculty.

“Centers and institutes are started and funded with institutional dollars for a certain number of years. The expectation is that these centers and institutes will take these dollars over a three year period and use those dollars to generate grants and gifts that will make centers and institutes self sufficient,” Berkman said. “Most universities have forgotten about the responsibility of centers and institutes to provide a return on that investment.”

Over the next year, some centers will either be consolidated, closed down or have 21 to 50 percent of their budgets cut.

Berkman said that everything presented at the meeting was not definite, but just recommendations.

But some faculty from centers and institutes disagree with Berkman’s view.

Bruce Nissen, director of research at the Center of Labor and Research Studies, said the provost’s remarks about centers and institutes owing money to University was “hogwash.”

“The Labor Center was created with a special state appropriation and FIU got extra money to create the center. It was created by an act of the state legislature and funding by the state legislature,” Nissen said.

The center is one that has been proposed to have its budget reduced by 50 percent or 100 percent the next year.

The Labor Center is a level four priority, SJC is considered a level three priority.

The plan places each University Center and department in one of four levels of priority: those in the lowest tier would receive the least cuts while those in the lower tiers would receive more.

The Labor Center is a level four priority, SJC is considered a level three priority.

The new plan calls for FIU to become a comprehensive urban research university with a “sharp strategic focus,” managed enrollment, higher tuition, more public assistance, private partnerships and more efficient management and infrastructure.

The president also laid out his five major areas of focus.

The centers and institutes that were delivered, some believe students there still believe there is still hope.

Research assistant for the center Cynthia Hernandez and Freshman Kevin Gonzalez walked in front of the audience minutes before the town hall meeting started with a banner that read, “Save the Labor Center.”

“Our struggle is going to continue and we’re going to continue to fight. The support is continuing to grow. I don’t think the battle is over and we’re certainly not finished,” Hernandez said.

Worried students fight for future of colleges

REATIONS, page 1

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Executive lay out plan to deal with budget cuts

BUDGET CUTS, page 2

new plan for the University in response to the cuts of 4 to 7 percent.

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Drop of Hope is a non-profit charity that collects reusable clothes and other items and sends them to needy families in Colombia. If you would like to donate, please e-mail giveadropofhope@gmail.com with the list of items you would like to donate.


CLASSIFIEDS

JOBS

Barbers needed for a new & cool barber shop opening in Fontainebleau Blvd. Call 786-329-1154 now.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Beacon – April 16, 2008

www.fiusm.com
Aspiring artist J.Carr satisfies his ‘need for speed’ through lyricism

J.Carr, The Future of the Franchise

I have so much to live for and I have so much that I’ve already had to live with. (It’s) the need to keep going, not stop; all the negative backlash. You can’t slow down.

J.Carr is simply a junior music majoring in advertising who listen. Although he is inspired by another form of entertainment — rap — he is known by his peers as an entertainer. He is happy for this opening; he can feel better about what you’re doing,” J.Carr said.

Born in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, J.Carr came to the U.S. at age two. He moved to the Cayman Islands during middle school, then returned to the U.S. for high school. Although he is inspired by many pessimistic scenarios, he said his music is optimistic.

“This is part of Release Week, which is to help students calm down and relax before finals, so they don’t feel stressed. Also, (it’s) to build a good relationship with local artists around FIU,” said Cadet, who is also chair of Release Week.

There will be eight other rappers performing at this event including Joe Hound, C-Ride, Young Breed, Hus-telman & Ghost P, Smokey and AJ.

The show will take place at 10 p.m. in the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Wolfe University Center Ballroom.

J.Carr explained that unlike the claims of many rappers, he doesn’t pretend to keep it real.

“Who does keep it real? I can’t keep it real. We all have dreams. We’re all dreamers. I mean, I don’t say I kill anybody; I don’t say I ride in a big bodied Benz, but when a metaphor comes across, I say something like, ‘You can’t see me, ‘cuz I’m gosshin’. I’m not a ghost.’

To get a preview of J.Carr’s music visit: www.jcarrmusic.com
Administration’s budget plan painful, but an unfortunate reality we now face

There is no question that the University is facing the worst budget cuts in its history. The State is asking University administration to cut anywhere from $9.2 to $16 million from its annual operating budget. In lieu of this, University President Modesto Maimique and his staff have been forced to make some difficult decisions, which they announced at a town hall meeting April 14.

They have had to prioritize academic centers and several operational factors such as personnel and technology services. This prioritization is unpopular and was met with hostility from students, employees and professors alike who were all disheartened to learn their respective departments were lower on the priority list than they had hoped.

People’s initial reaction to the cuts are understandable. Many administrators seem to grasp what their department has done to merit being placed among the lowest in FIU’s list of priorities. It is ok to disagree with these decisions, but realize that you are reacting on emotion, right fully so.

“My understanding is that initially, the school was supposed to receive a substantial budget reduction; however, there has been a push by the provost to work with limited resources and try to minimize the damage the budget crisis has inflicted to the University,” Frank said.

The fact of the matter is that the administration is not making these cuts because it wants to, it is making them because it has to. And because it is the nature of tough decisions, not everyone is going to be happy with the outcome.

The University has developed a set of criteria to base its decision on. The University bases ranking of departments on several factors. Those departments that are among the top priority for the University, levels one and two, are those that are either essential to the core curriculum or have “a high mission alignment.”

Those departments ranked lower by the administration have “less mission alignment,” access to alternative funding to offset the cuts or centers and institutes which do not produce a sufficient return on investment.

Being classified as a Carnegie Research I institution, the University is expected to publish a certain number of scholarly articles. When articles are published, the University not only accrues prestige but receives grants and alternative funding which is both a return on investment and is in line with the University’s institutional mission, which lists research as a top priority.

Those programs which not only fail to publish regularly, but also have numerous, high-cost degree programs with few students are departments which have been considered a low priority.

Though these departments have not been held to such high publishing standards in the past, in a time when the University must decide which departments it considers a high priority, those departments which have been yielding an adequate return on investment can understandably be placed in a higher tier.

Students do not, nor can they be expected to understand such things as they are completely out of their control.

Cutting every program equally may have been the fair and easy way out, but not the best for the future of FIU. It’s easy to blame University officials for coming up with a strategy to try and minimize the harm the budget cuts are inflicting on FIU.

We must realize that they are working with limited resources and trying to minimize the damage the budget crisis has already done.

It’s OK to disagree with the criteria the University is using to make its decisions, but this is the reality we face.

What do you think? Do you think the University has its priorities straight?

• Yes – The University is dealing with the budget deficit in a fair and efficient manner.
• No – The wrong colleges, programs and centers are being affected.

Cast your vote at www.fi usm.com

Double Whammy

I’m not coming in ‘til August 2009, but thanks for the cash! You rock!

Now, the things we can do with this money... maybe win more than a single game...

Teachers have to be worth more than this!!

When I found out that the College of Education was being lowered in priority, it felt like one of my eyes was just poked out, as I’m majoring in education.

If that were not bad enough, FIU just had to blind me when it decided to lower the School of Journalism and Mass Communications as well, lumping the SIMC into “niche” programs.

The University does not have its priorities straight. For starters the College of Education has produced over 16,000 educators since it opened. Those educators have spread throughout the country, but most of them teach right in our own backyard in South Florida.

According to Marty Medina, Asst. News Director, the University bases ranking of departments on several factors. Those departments that are among the top priority for the University, levels one and two, are those that are either essential to the core curriculum or have “a high mission alignment.”

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Not only will the majority of those students go on to teach in Florida, but in the mean time they help shell out thousands of dollars worth of volunteer service.

Every education student has to volunteer at local public schools as part of their course load. The college produces roughly $200,000 worth of volunteer service in just one semester.

It’s sad that the University is making the same stance with educators as the rest of the country: overwork, underpay, under appreciate and now under fund them.

An institution that serves the community to this extent should not be moved to the lowest level of importance. Not when the over-funded and over-glorified Athletics remains at the top.

Athletics already received a fee increase that I think it should not have gotten. In 2007, it lost 12 athletic scholarships because it was not properly managing its students.

And then there’s the football team. The same team FIU puts so much stock in, is the worst team it will turn a profit. At least this is what Athletics Director Pete Garcia and Maimique have hinted at many times in various public forums.

This logic is discredited as a complete myth, according to a research by Richard H. Frank, and Henrietta Johnson Louis professor of management and professor of economics at Cornell University (which can be found at knightfoundaton.org).

According to his research published in 2004, the success of a University’s athletic program “does not meaningfully increase either the amount of alumni donations nor the quality of a college’s student applicants.”

Essentially, the article also states that the most a winning football team could do for its University is slightly increase the number of average students (based on SAT scores) who apply to the university.

Given our enrollment caps next year, means that even if we had a winning football team, it would not do FIU any good.

Cutting back a little on Athletics would not hurt either.

“The empirical literature provides not a shred of evidence to suggest that an across-the-board cutback in spending on athletics would reduce either donations or alumni applications by prospective students,” Frank said in his research.

For sports fans it’s a hard truth to hear, but football on any sport for that matter helps the University.

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Asst. News Director

During a town hall meeting, University President Modesto Maimique announced F IU’s fund ing priorities. Right at the top is Athletics and the College of Medicine.

Not a big surprise to see these areas at the top. However, the decision to put several colleges, schools and programs at the bottom of the barrel was a huge one.

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And then there’s the football team. The same team FIU puts so much stock in, is the worst team ever in Division I-A football, only garnering one win out of its last 24 games.

But the logic is that if the University has a great football team it will turn a profit. At least this is what Athletics Director Pete Garcia and Maimique have hinted at many times in various public forums.

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CABRAL, page 1

What were your reactions to Monday’s town hall meeting?

Paul Ashe
Sophomore

“It’s been great to see so many students come out and support their degree programs and provide insight to the administration.”

Roberto Moreno
Senior

“Students should be encouraged to come to all of the budget hearings.”

Mariana Castro
Junior

“I didn’t expect the reaction from the students toward the speakers and vice versa.”

Jane Daughtery
SJMC Faculty

“Journalism students showed up and exercised their freedom of expression in a creative and positive way.”

Dorothie Lagerre
Senior

“It’s pretty messed up. They’re taking money away from our education and putting it into sports and investing in Athletics. It’s not like they’re winning games.”

IN LABOR: Students to save the Labor Center hold a banner in support of the center. As part of the plan to ease the effects of the expected budget cuts, the center will lose 50 percent funding.

Putting a halt on expansion might help

EDUCATION, page 4

no one in society, but its all about the “prestige” according to Maidique.

If prestige is something the University wants so badly, why would it consider putting the SJMC at the bottom of its priorities?

As it stands it is one of the only six schools of journalism in the state that is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

Overall there are only 110 programs accredited by the ACEJMC in the country.

It has produced successful graduates such as Liz Balmaseda, Manny Garcia, Eunice Ponce, Mireidy Fernandez, Johnny Diaz and Jasmine Kipalani who have all won Pulitzer Prizes.

While I’m on the subject, they have won more Pulitzers than all the other universities in Florida put together, and Balmaseda and Garcia have each won twice.

But FIU seemingly wants to abandon its already established prestigious colleges to build new ones. Imagine how things would stand if there were no upcoming College of Medicine.

Instead of having to divert funding away from pre-existing institutions on campus, we could use that money to keep everything going without major cutbacks.

I understand that medical school or football stadium funding cannot legally be diverted elsewhere. But could the administration at least not take away possible private donations from deserving schools?

The SJMC tried to solicit a donation from Univision, a Spanish television station, but were told no because FIU already hit them up for funding for the new stadium.

And let’s not forget last year when Maidique lost $40 million worth of donations for the College of Medicine when he “upset” the donor, Herbert Wertheim, namesake of FIU’s performing arts center.

While it’s wise for any university to invest in their future students, we are faced with a budget crisis right now and money needs to be focused on the vital programs already in place.

The only alternative is to stop expansion. Why can’t FIU wait a few years to start the medical school or expand the Athletics department so that other areas do not have to suffer?

Budgets have not been slashed yet. Irrevocable damage has not been done. Hopefully FIU will come to its senses before it’s too late.

Ben F. Badger can be reached at ben.badger@fiu.edu

Heal care blamed for cuts’ impact

aid program.

Of course the ballooning cost -care programs have contributed in part to the current budget shortfall, but President Maidique’s overly simplistic explanation for the budget disaster our state is currently facing leaves far too many people off the hook.

In fact, the primary reason our state is in the bind boils down to one critical factor – and it is not Medicaid.

The primary reason, that most defenders of the cuts cite, is a decline in sales tax revenue due to the recent economic downturn.

As The New York Times noted on March 17 of this year: “Florida has seen its sales tax revenue decline for two straight fiscal years, the first time officials there recall that happening, as a result of a collapsing housing market that has homeowners spending less.

The state, which has no income tax, relies heavily on sales taxes for its state programs.”

It is the economic climate itself that is at fault, not the “ secular force” Maidique seems so eager to blame.

Yet for some odd reason, Maidique seemed to cast these health care programs as the reason for the cuts.

He reserved no criticism for Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio, the Speaker of the State House, who not only approves of these massive cuts but says this budget will leave Floridians “better off.”

“It’s the kind of budget the people of Florida need at a time like this,” Rubio said, in an interview with the Palm Beach Post on March 31 of this year.

The students who attend the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the School of Arts and Architecture, who may see their schools disbanded as a result of these cuts, would disagree.

So will as many as 200 faculty members who stand to lose their jobs.

Yet President Maidique, who deserves credit for taking questions from many irate students, heaped praise on Rubio, speaking of his “great efforts” on the issue of education funding.

Perhaps he has done good things for FIU in years past, and I’ve been told that the cuts to FIU are less severe than to other universities.

Many of his defenders describe him as an honorable man. Nevertheless, someone who has pushed for a $2 billion cut to education that will likely result in the loss of thousands of jobs and the elimination of hundreds of higher education programs across the state should not be praised by the president of our university.

In fact, there was a bizarre, deceptively upbeat quality to Maidique’s remarks.

Maidique, and the massive PowerPoint slides projected behind him, described the changes to FIU (as a result of the cuts) as an “evolution,” as if to imply these changes constitute some sort of progress.

The potential elimination of jobs and programs were called “ restructuring opportunities,” and not a word of criticism was uttered for those in Tallahassee preparing to give final approval to these cuts.

To borrow a phrase used by Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez multiple times during the meeting, it must be nice to “live in a world” like the one described by this school’s administration – a world where shutting down schools constitutes an “evolution,” a lost job is an “opportunity” and the “friends” of FIU in Tallahassee bear no responsibility for the horrific consequences of budget cuts they’ve created.

Chris Cabral can be reached at chris.cabral@fiu.edu
It’s time to throw down your books, toss your pens in the air and rip your schedules into confetti – summer is finally here! Are you so excited that you have no clue what you’re going to do with your newfound freedom? Well, grab a few friends and take a geeky road trip through your home state. Florida is so chockfull of strange places to visit, you’ll be able to satisfy the most eclectic of tastes.

Start your engines and aim for the southernmost point to take a haunted tour of Key West. Featured on the shows “America’s Most Haunted Places” and “Weird Travels,” Ghost Tours of Key West will take you on a 90-minute, half-mile walking tour of the creepiest places in historic Old Town.

For $15, tours begin at 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., visiting places like Captain Tony’s Saloon, the state’s oldest bar which was once an icehouse and city morgue, and the Banyan Resort whose former owner, Mr. Cosgrove, still walks its halls. Not up for a spooky nighttime walk? Instead, stroll through the city cemetery in the daytime. Located at 701 Passover Lane, the Key West cemetery is home to memorable epitaphs such as “I told you I was sick” and “at least I know where he’s sleeping tonight.”

If you want to know your future, drive up to Cassadaga – the self-named “psychic capital of the world.” Located north of Deltona, Cassadaga was founded in 1875 by New Yorker George Colby. Colby followed his spirit guide down to Seneca, now our modern day Volusia County, and started the spiritualist camp. Today, Cassadaga is home to more than 47 mediums who offer services ranging from tarot readings and aura photography, to spiritual healings and seances. While there, you can even take classes in mediumship, intuitive development and self-realization to connect with the spirit world.

Visit www.cassadaga.org for more information.

Want to see mermaids? Zip over to Spring Hill to see some perform in an underwater, synchronized ballet at Weeki Wachee Springs. In business since 1947, Weeki Wachee’s mermaids perform themed shows such as “The Little Mermaid” and “Fish Tales,” daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for $24.95.

These sirens have managed to ensnare a visit from Elvis himself, and have had Brit pop band, Supergrass, shoot their video for “Low C” on location. You can visit them online at www.weekiwa-chee.com.

If there’s one thing cooler than mermaids, it’s dinosaurs. Dinosaur World in Plant City is home to more than 150 lifesized dinosaur models and skeletons. Just an hour west of Orlando, a visit lets you unleash your inner paleontologist to carry out some “field work” by digging in the park’s fossil dig and boneyard.

With the $12.95 entry fee, you even have access to the park’s museum where you can ogle dinosaur eggs and raptor claws. Go ahead and drool away - at last you can live out those “Jurassic Park” fantasies with abandon! Park details can be found at www.dinoworld.net.

While all this awesome can be overwhelming, don’t forget to mail some postcards back home to family and friends at the smallest post office in the U.S. The Ochopee Post Office is a roomy seven-by-eight feet in size and sits at the edge of the Everglades on U.S. 41.

Pre-stamped postcards are already waiting for you on the counter top, so don’t keep them holding out for long - get in your car and start road-tripping today.
College gossip finds new home at Juicy Campus

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In our tech savvy world it seems that everyday there is a new Web site vying for the public’s attention. Some last, such as Myspace, and others wane over time – who visits Bored.com anymore? The latest in this chase for brain space is www.JuicyCampus.com, a Web site that dishes the dirt on campus life across the nation.

The site was created with the intention of giving students a place to share their interesting campus stories. “Thinking back to my college years, there were always crazy hilarious things that were happening. Why not give people a place to share these stories?” said founder and CEO Matt Ivester.

The Web site, which is owned by Lime Blue, a Nevada LLC, was founded on Aug. 1, 2007 with the mission of enabling online anonymous free speech on college campuses.

The site allows students to select their school and category depending on the student’s subject. Students can write about faculty, administration, Greek organizations, sports/athletes, spring break, students or even things they overhear on campus.

Ivester’s goal is for the site to expand across the country to different campuses all over the states. Currently some of the schools listed are Columbia University, University of Miami, University of Florida and University of California Los Angeles.

The site has been the subject of much controversy, with CNN noting that it “has proved so poisonous there are signs of a backlash.” Stanford University forced a similar Web site to shut down almost a year ago. On Dec. 9, 2007, Carlos Huerta was arrested at Loyola Marymount University for criminal threats he allegedly posted on the site. He was released the following day on bail that had been set at $100,000.

A student from Colgate University was also arrested for making similar threats.

Even though the site is anonymous there is a way to track down who wrote what, but it can only be done by an internet specialist with a warrant.

Although FIU is not listed among these schools the site allows anyone to suggest a school as long as an e-mail address is provided.

The site is user generated, since at the end of the day it is the students who are writing about their campus. FIU College of Law Assistant Professor Cyra Akilla Choudhury said that it would be nice for students to exercise restraint when posting on the site.

“Everyone has the right to express their own opinions, but it depends on how the person expresses their opinion and if they do it appropriately,” Choudhury said.

Nursing student and sophomore Dena Jette felt that her reputation might be tarnished if FIU was on the Web site. “I wouldn’t want to see FIU on the web site because I wouldn’t want my classmates speaking bad about me,” she said.

Whether it is to vent or simply see what other students have to say about their campus, JuicyCampus.com is certainly a good way for students to say what’s on their mind about their university.
The one-run lead quickly evaporated in the following inning as MTSU put up three more runs, with the help of three FIU errors, in the top of the second inning to go up 4-2. The Blue Raiders put two more runs in the third inning and one in the sixth before finally scoring a run in the seventh to win by a 7-3 score.

The Golden Panthers had an opportunity to win the game for FIU but grounded into an inning-ending double play with runners on the corners. FIU errors, in the top of the second inning finally going on to win by a 7-3 score.

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Senior Jorge Castillo, posting .377 average with a comfortable 6-2 lead.

"I just felt good at the plate, and I’m not worried about the hitting streak. I’d just rather win some games."

"As a matter of fact, we had a lot of good clutch performances on our part and I was very proud of how they played today."

"It’s a very tough loss," Thomas said. "I do OK. I mean, I didn’t have my stuff, but I just tried to throw strikes and make them get outs themselves," Polizzano said. "They just made little bunters that found the holes and scored some runs."

"I just feel good at the plate, and I’m honestly just trying to get to hit every at-bat for the team," he said. "I’m not worried about the hitting streak. I’d just rather win some games."

"I know that I had to come through, because we hadn’t been coming through and it was up to me," Mollica said. "I just calmed myself down and put a good swing on it." He finished this series hitting 6-for-11 with three RBI and three runs scored.

Mollica’s contributions surely have caught the eyes of the coaching staff and his return next year as a senior will surely be something to look forward to.

Up-Next The Golden Panthers will look to improve upon their 5-10 Sun Belt Conference record as they go on the road to face New Orleans in a three-game set April 18-20.

"I felt good, just a couple balls didn’t bounce my way, and we kind of dug our- selves into a hole because of those errors," Stewart said. "I just have to keep the ball on the whole game instead of letting a situation get out of hand more and be more mentally focused."

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