Civil engineering students who work in FIU’s Structures and Construction Laboratory now have a new reason to smash things.

With Miami-Dade County’s recent accreditation of the lab, students can now test products to their breaking points to determine whether building materials comply with the county’s hurricane building code.

“When you see a huge structural member being loaded all the way to failure — knowing how it fails, seeing visually how it fails — it makes a long lasting impact in the mind of any student,” said Amir Mirmiran, professor and interim dean of the College of Engineering and Computing. Although there are other hurricane testing labs in the area, the SCL “stands out” because of its size, said Jamie Sawang.

“The lab is quite unique,” Mirmiran said. “This is the only lab in the state of Florida that allows us to test a bridge inside a lab — up to a 65-foot bridge. The lab allows us to test the entire house inside the lab under uplift that is generated by wind.”

Nakin Sukawang, assistant director of the SCL, explained that the size of the lab is important because while most structural labs scale down their models, the SCL allows full-scale structure testing. The results using scaled models might not reflect “the actual behavior” of a full-sized structure in a storm, said Sukawang.

“The lab is quite unique,” Mirmiran said. “This is the only lab in the state of Florida that allows us to test a bridge inside a lab — up to a 65-foot bridge. The lab allows us to test the entire house inside the lab under uplift that is generated by wind.”

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO Beacon Staff

With their future uncertain due to unprecetented budget cuts at FIU, mailroom employees are worried their protest are falling on deaf ears.

“This is hard and it’s hard for everyone,” said Vivian Sanchez, senior vice president for Finance and Operations. “We are really trying to do the right thing.”

Frustrations over the possibility of the postal services being outsourced have resulted in outspoken protest by mailroom employees.

Sanchez, as well as University President Modesto Maidique and Provost Ronald M. Berkman, have been steadfast in communicating with the University community that nothing has been decided and that all options are on the table.

However, emphasis is being placed in the “need to protect the educational and instructional part of the institution,” Sanchez said, adding that finding internal “deficiencies” and external “investment dollars” is necessary to keep the University growing academically.

For years, the mailroom has sent proposals to different department heads in attempts to implement ideas that would save the University money, said Assistant Post Manager Livio Dominguez.

One of his ideas is to update and correct mailing lists. The turnaround rate – rejected mail that is returned at a fee – costs the University around $20,000 a year, he calculates.

The search for investment dollars led the University to consider sending out Request for Proposals to various multinational vendors to outsource a package of services including mailing.

This launched the subsequent verbal protests by mailroom employees during the University Services and Personnel Senate meeting on April 9 and the President’s Town Hall meeting on April 14.

According to Catherine Vasquez, assistant to the Post Manager, mailroom employees were approached three weeks ago and told about the possibility of outsourcing. The following Monday after the announcement, she said, vendors were surveying the mailroom.

Vasquez calls the move “unfair” because mailroom employees’ desires to make it more efficient and economical were attempted for years but were ignored by the University.

Senior Clerk Thomas L. Piacente, said when the employees were told about the outsourcing, none of the representatives from Facilities could answer their questions.

Sanchez said she never heard of any proposals from the mailroom until an April 16 Beacon interview with Nicolas Diciacco, director of Facilities Operations, said that he had only received one from the Biscayne Bay Campus mailroom a few years ago.

For the sake of transparency and communication, Sanchez said, she organized the April 22 meeting after the mailroom sent her a letter in protest of the outsourcing.

“The lack of communication will be brought up, as well as the instructions given by the Facilities administration that forbid the entire mail room from speaking to The Beacon,” Vasquez said. Sanchez eventually lifted the ban when she became aware of it.

When The Beacon expressed concern that administration may not be acting as transparent as it claims, Sanchez said that accusation “rings to the core of what we are, and it’s a little bit offensive.”

FERNANDEZ, page 3
As we work with a difficult budget year, Meyer said. “We plan to work as hard as we possibly can with our budget and trying to accomplish many initiatives.”

While hopeful of completing all of his campaign promises, Meyer said that fulfilling all of them may not happen during his tenure.

“It’s not necessarily that every one of our platform points will be accomplished this upcoming year,” Meyer said. “If we don’t fully accomplish them, the foundation will be set for future administrations to come in and accomplish those initiatives.”

Aside from budget concerns, securing a complete cabinet is another Latinx priority for Meyer’s new staff.

Normally, cabinet positions are appointed by the SGC-UP president, but following tradition, the 2008 cabinet started by Hernandez, positions are open to any students who wish to apply. Applications for cabinet positions are now available on the SGC-UP office located in Graham Center room 211. The deadline to complete and submit applications is April 22.

This year, there will be 13 different cabinet positions and two assistant positions to the Chief of Staff and Student Advocate.

According to Anthony Rionda, this year’s chief of staff, one of the most important new cabinet positions is the Coordinator of Parking Safety, since one of the issues brought up at nearly all SGC-UP forums has been security.

Other challenges that await Meyer and LaPointe include the integration of a new constitution and a new governing council, the Student Council Organizations. Despite cabinet challenges, LaPointe is confident in her administration.
PARTING WITH SWEET SORROW

NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

CUTTING OUT After 25 years of service as associate dean to the FIU School of Hospitality Management, Lee Dickson celebrates his retirement from administration.

Cafeteria's future on hold

JULIA CARDENUTO Contributing Writer

It is the end of the spring term and many students are wondering when the new cafeteria will be ready. The remodeling project, involving many Biscayne Bay Campus areas, began in late 2004 and is costing $4 million, according to reports in The Beacon from November 2007.

Gregory Olson, senior director of Student Affairs, said he has no predictions for when the new cafeteria will be complete. “There is a permit in Tallahassee and we are still waiting for it to come through,” Olson said.

Akens, assistant vice president of Student Affairs, said last time she checked, the project was scheduled to be completed in August of 2007, but that the University is still waiting for the permit.

The new cafeteria will cover 10,000 square feet and seat a capacity of 235 people. FIU is currently under contract with Aramark to provide dining services at BBC. Akens said that FIU will continue using Aramark’s services to supply food for students. The larger cafeteria will provide more food options and diverse vendors than the current cafeteria. Since 2006, students affairs and the student government council have been conducting surveys asking students their opinions of what the new cafeteria should serve. Akens said that the idea of an all-you-can-eat buffet has been discarded. There will be 9,000 square feet of empty space once the current cafeteria moves to its new location and the question of what to do with that area is still unanswered.

Akens said student affairs is concerned with students wants and needs. “We plan to talk with students and find out exactly what they want and what are their priorities and ideas for a recreational space,” Akens said.

Last October, the idea of dividing the space left by the current cafeteria into two separate rooms was introduced. One room would be a multipurpose room and the other a student lounge. Akens said that this idea is still possible and that student affairs really wants to give students a new recreational space.

Both Olson and Akens will not make any predictions of when students will be able to enjoy the new dining facilities at the BBC. John Cal, the associate vice president of facilities management, was not available for comment.

Alumna self-publishes book to guide students in faith

TATIANA CAMPUZANO Contributing Writer

Caroline Arit Okon Thompson, an FIU alumna who completed her degree in counselor education in 2006, has just published her latest book, “Parental Influence Matters.”

Published in December 2007 by iUniverse, “Parental Influence Matters” provides readers with guidance on how parents’ involvement in their children’s lives is the key to raise exceptional individuals, according to Thompson.

“A child needs to act like a child but needs to do it wisely. If not, they can’t be responsible adults,” Thompson said.

Incorporating aspects such as family, tradition, discipline and heritage, Thompson combines personal knowledge, community analysis and her African background to reach parents and parents to be.

“I cherish the tradition where I came from. You can’t raise your children without them learning your heritage.” Thompson said, quoting an African proverb. “In Africa, it takes a village to raise a child.”

Dwight Nimlett, assistant director of the Student Learning Center at Biscayne Bay Campus, and Reymond Levy, an adjunct English instructor at University Park, were helping hands in the process of writing the book.

Thompson sought support from Nimlett and Levy to put her material together and obtain the professional guidance necessary to make her book a success.

“Caroline and I clicked since the beginning, she brought in her manuscripts and I assisted her by giving her all the support needed before publication,” Nimlee said. “She is an amazing person, and the sky is the limit for her.”

Levy also wrote the book’s foreword.

“She divided her book into ten different qualities that matter in life and goes through each aspect, making this book a very practical life advice book,” Levy said.

“The Power of Faith-Lord Increases my Faith.”

Since then, Thompson has presented seminars about enriching woman, woman of faith, and hosting youth events at the Open Bible Church, among others.

Thompson will be signing copies of “Parental Influence Matters” at the Broward Regional Library, Thursday, April 24 at 7 p.m. The library is located at 100 S. Andrews Avenue, in Fort Lauderdale.

“Parental Influence Matters” is available in most major bookstores in hard and soft cover editions.

Cuts not a factor in departure

Cats on the Hunt page 2

“It was not part of my decision. In the contrary, the budget crisis, in some ways, made me think whether I should leave at this point because I would want to help the institution,” he said. “These positions take half a year or more to fill and I applied in the fall. We weren’t clear on the severity of the crisis [back then]. The timing was just coincidental.”

Fernandez has been the director of the Cuban Research Institute at FIU for the past five years.

His career with the University began in 1988 as an assistant professor in the department of international relations where he continued teaching.

In September of 2006 Fernandez was named interim vice provost for BBC and has since maximized opportunities for undergraduate research and performance; developed a plan that created new start-to-finish programs and expanded the Honors College.

Uva De Aragon, associate director for the CRI, said working with Fernandez is challenging.

“He’s very demanding, and I say it in a good way,” De Aragon said.

Fernandez made his mark by taking the institute a step further with new partnerships, grants and initiatives, according to De Aragon, who has been working for the institute for 13 years.

“For the past four years [we haven’t been able] to go to Cuba and he found a way to make our work relevant. He did that by engaging with partners in Canada, Mexico and Washington,” she said. “Having conferences outside of the U.S made it easier for other Cubans to attend.”

With the announcement of Fernandez’s resignation, Cristina EguiZabal, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, will oversee the CRI for the next year, according to De Aragon.

“You always have to be happy for any colleague that pursues greener pastures, even though it’s a loss for FIU,” De Aragon said.
**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

President Modesto Maidique opens budget meetings to reporters

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to the article and editorial in the April 21 edition of The Beacon about Beacon staff’s efforts to attend a Budget Stabilization Task meeting.

It is the position of the University that meetings of this task force are not subject to the Sunshine Law because this committee functions in an information-gathering, consultative capacity, with no delegated or decision-making authority.

The Budget Stabilization Task Represenative includes a student representative as well as representatives of other key constituencies such as the Division of Student Affairs, faculty, staff, deans, research and university finance. It is my understanding that the case and legal advice cited by The Beacon simply do not apply to this situation. Beacon reporters did not have the right to barge into the meeting last week, even if they believed that this meeting was subject to the Sunshine Law.

However, I recognize that Beacon reporters and readers are interested in the work this committee is doing to help us address the current budget crisis. In the spirit of transparency, cooperation and the continued sharing of information.

Sincerely,

Modesto A. Maidique
President, FIU

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**Want to go green?**

Look beyond cars and gasoline use

JASON GELLER Contributing Writer

Smokestack fumes spewing from factories and carbon emissions spouting from Hummer tailpipes are threats to a sustainable future. Yet, the amount of press they are receiving is from the “going green” movement. What should be noted, though, is that there are other lesser-known evils plaguing the biosphere.

More attention must be focused on less prominent emitters of carbon, such as the harmful effects of livestock grazing as well as land degradation caused by overdevelopment.

The current state of debates raises the question of whether the only ones being exposed to the candidates’ discussions are the candidates themselves, campaign managers and their friends. It would read that the student body, representatives, or anyone of us were informed of what took place on campus.

To achieve this, it would be necessary to extend the campaigning process. As seen in the last election, one week is not enough to get to know the aspiring university leaders.

“Since [Gun] didn’t vote, her voice was not heard by students,” said Ana Maria Cuevas, a senior in political science at FIU and an SGA representative.

The people running for office are obviously well-known by students, said Anna Maria Saniebiean, a freshman studying chemistry. But for biology student Bridgette Price, “The people running [for office] are not a question of popularity, as she explained her reasons for not voting: “It’s not that I think they don’t do anything good, it’s just that it benefits only the Greek life,” Gun said.

Some within SGA have a different take on this issue of apathy, though. “Since [Gun] didn’t vote, her voice was not heard by students,” said Anna Maria Saniebiean, a freshman studying chemistry. But for biology student Bridgette Price, “The people running [for office] are not a question of popularity, as she explained her reasons for not voting: “It’s not that I think they don’t do anything good, it’s just that it benefits only the Greek life,” Gun said.

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Luck brings secular Biatti to Miami's Crocs Tour

At least at this university, Biatti seems to have passed the ice-cold beer music review.
**WEEND RUNDOWN**

**FRIDAY • APRIL 18**

- **WHERE:** Jackie Gleason Theater
  - **WHAT:** Miami Beach, FL 33139
  - **HOW MUCH:** $46.50 - $83

- **WHERE:** Barefoot at Oasis
  - **WHAT:** belly moti ons inc.
  - **HOW MUCH:** Varies

- **WHERE:** Miami Beach, FL 33139
  - **WHAT:** Exxxotica
  - **HOW MUCH:** $35

- **WHERE:** Miami Hip Hop Arts Festival
  - **WHAT:** Miami Beach, FL 33139
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE:** Revolution Live
  - **WHAT:** Avril Lavigne
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE:** Upper Eastside Garden
  - **WHAT:** Back 9 mini golf course
  - **HOW MUCH:** £35

- **WHERE:** Upper Eastside Garden
  - **WHAT:** Rockstar Energy AP Tour
  - **HOW MUCH:** £35

- **WHERE:** Culture Room
  - **WHAT:** Reba
  - **HOW MUCH:** £54 - 95

- **WHERE:** Miami Beach, FL 33142
  - **WHAT:** Miami Hip-Hop Arts Festival
  - **HOW MUCH:** Varies

**SATURDAY • APRIL 19**

- **WHERE:** Jackie Gleason Theater
  - **WHAT:** Miami Beach, FL 33139
  - **HOW MUCH:** $46.50 - $83

- **WHERE:** Miami Hip Hop Arts Festival
  - **WHAT:** Miami Beach, FL 33139
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE:** Revolution Live
  - **WHAT:** Avril Lavigne
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE:** Upper Eastside Garden
  - **WHAT:** Back 9 mini golf course
  - **HOW MUCH:** £35

- **WHERE: **Culture Room
  - **WHAT:** Reba
  - **HOW MUCH:** £54 - 95

**SUNDAY • APRIL 20**

- **WHERE: **Joseph Caleb Auditorium
  - **WHAT:** Guys and Dolls
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE: **Bakehouse Art Complex
  - **WHAT:** Miami Hip-Hop Arts Festival
  - **HOW MUCH:** Varies

- **WHERE: **Revolution Live
  - **WHAT:** Avril Lavigne
  - **HOW MUCH:** $31

- **WHERE: **Upper Eastside Garden
  - **WHAT:** Back 9 mini golf course
  - **HOW MUCH:** £35

- **WHERE: **Culture Room
  - **WHAT:** Reba
  - **HOW MUCH:** £54 - 95

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  - **BSC 1011**
    - **$110.67**

- **Used Price**
  - **ECO 3203**
    - **$129.10**

  - **AGC 3301**
    - **$138.40**

  - **BSC 1011**
    - **$163.95**

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57365 – CPO 3304 - Politics of Latin America. Mon/Wed, 9:30am–12:45pm

Summer B:
57002 – CPO 3304 - Politics of Latin America. Mon/Wed, 9:30am–12:45pm
52337 – ECS 3201 - Women, Culture, and Economic Development. On Line
52359 – INR 3243 - International Relations of Latin America. Tu/Th, 3:30pm–6:15pm
56228 – SPW 3130 - Introduction to Spanish American Literature. Tu/Th, 5:00–7:40 pm

Summer C:
56637 – MUH 3541 - Music of Latin America: Folklore and Beyond. On Line
57096 – MUH 5546 - Music of the Americas. On Line

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Make your ABLE/LINA proud!
First baseman Tyler Townsend was inches away from breaking a 9-9 tie in the bottom of the eighth inning. His line drive landed in the glove of Barry centerfielder Andrew Frezza.

If Frezza doesn’t catch the ball, the Golden Panthers head into the ninth inning with a two-run lead. Instead, they headed into the ninth still in a tie.

Without recording a hit, Barry managed to score the game-winning run off a wild pitch.

After scoring 16 runs and amassing 12 hits in an extra-inning victory in their previous meeting, the Golden Panthers (12-27) fell to Barry University 10-9 on April 15 at University Park Stadium.

Sophomore Jorge Ramos, who is pushing for a spot in the weekend rotation, pitched 3 innings and didn’t allow a run on 4 hits. He also hit with FIU ahead 4-0 and received a no-decision.

“I felt good out there, and everything was working for me, so I felt comfortable out there,” Ramos said. “I also felt comfortable about the lead, knowing that my team was going to score for me. Unfortunately, our pitching didn’t hold up. It’s OK though; I’m pretty sure that we’re going to turn this thing around and get the job done.”

The Buccaneers (29-12) stormed back from a four-run deficit by scoring three runs in the fourth inning and two in the fifth.

Senior Jorge Castillo would tie up the score 5-5 with a solo home run in the bottom of the fifth inning off of Barry starter Aaron Main.

Though senior reliever Carlos Martinez rebounded from a previous poor outing on April 13 and pitched 1.2 innings of scoreless relief, the Golden Panther bullpen was once again a problem as relievers Daniel DeSimone and Kyle Preshong allowed nine runs, eight of which were earned.

FIU trailed 9-5 in the latter part of the game before finally tying up the score in the eighth inning. Freshman Jorge Marban (0-3) took the loss for FIU even though the deciding run he allowed was unearned when he committed a throwing error. Bobby Riley (5-2-1) picked up the win for Barry.

Sophomore Enrique Cepero was the designated hitter and went 2-5 with one RBI. The hits were the first of his collegiate career. It was also his first collegiate start.

“It was good,” he said. “I was excited, and I was pumped. Each pitch, my heart started beating faster and faster, but I gotta do what I gotta do.”

Sophomore Ryan Mollica finished 2-for-5 with one RBI and two runs scored. He also extended his hitting streak to 21 games but fell out to right field to end the game with runners on the corners.

The Golden Panthers have lost nine of their last 10 games, including two two-inning losses.


courtesy/BBU

Tennis team heads into the Sun Belt Conference Tournament ranked No. 51

Jonathan Ramos
Asst. Sports Editor

Heading into the Sun Belt Conference tournament, the Golden Panthers (11-8) will feel very familiar with their surroundings. As the three-time reigning conference champions, FIU should be comfortable and confident with what it can accomplish at that level.

With that optimism, the women’s tennis team will be out to avenge a NCAA regional loss to South Florida and contend for a national championship. The 4-3 loss to the Bulls last season was an early exit for team looking to advance deep into the national bracket.

The Golden Panthers found out they seeding at the league tournament at the University of Louisiana-Monroe and are guaranteed to be the third seed in the field of 12 schools and will also receive a first-round bye.

The team begins competition today at 7:30 p.m., and will go on to play the winner of the match-up of No. 6 seed North Texas and No. 11 seed Florida Atlantic.

The Golden Panthers defeated South Alabama in its final match of the season in preparation for the tournament and shoulder high expectations due to their history. The match was close as three of the six singles contests went into third sets and another was decided by a tie breaker, but FIU was able to close on their way to a No. 51 ranking in the nation.

USA, who was ranked in the top 50 in the nation prior to the contest, gives FIU a signature win going into the postseason.

Denver, who comes in with an impressive 19-2 regular season record, will give the Golden Panthers their biggest road block toward a fourth straight conference crown. Mallory Voelker, who is ranked No. 65 in the country, will look to lead DU to its second women’s tennis championship. DU, who is the first seed in the tournament, won the title on one previous occasion in 2004. USA is the second seed in the tournament.

Coming into the playoffs, FIU throws out the two strong doubles tandems in the nation with No. 27 Egle Petrauskaita and Liset Brito (427) and No. 51 Brito and Priscilla Castillo. In addition to her doubles ranking, Brito is also ranked the No. 107 among singles player.