HUNGER Pangs
Cafeteria on hold, waiting for permit

GET OUT THE VOTE
Campaigning needs to be revamped

PORN PARTY
Stars, toys hit South Beach

SUN BELT TOURNEY
Tennis vies for conference crown

PUTTING THE WINDS TO WORK

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO
IRENE PORTILLO
Beacon Staff

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 in order 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 Gascon, Product Controls Division Chief in the Miami-Dade Building Code Compliance Office.

The SCL is one of the largest research labs in South Florida with 2,250 square feet of space.

“I read the advertising and I called,” said Nakin Sukawang, assistant director of the SCL. “He [Sanchez] 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.”

MAILROOM EMPLOYEES PROTEST POSSIBLE LAYOFFS

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO
Staff Writer

With their future uncertain due to unprecendented budget cuts at FIU, mailroom employees are worried their protests 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 outsourcing 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 Caterina 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 she read about the outsourcing.

“Some of the things we have tried in the past by another member in that firm so it was a mutual interest,” he said. “But at the same time, it’s bittersweet. We’ve all been committed to FIU in general, but to BCC in specific,” Sanchez said. “Despite the current budget challenges, I know that the momentum that we inaugurated here years ago will continue.”

With the help of Witt/Keifer, an executive search firm that helps individuals find jobs within the university system, Fernandez accepted the position.

“I heard the advertising and I called the person. I was approached in the past by another member in that firm so it was acting as transparent,” he said.

Fernandez said the budget cuts the University community that nothing has been decided and that all options are on the table.

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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 at the time 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 true” to the core of what we are, and it’s a little bit offensive.”
We are working with a difficult budget year," Meyer said. "We plan to work as hard as we possibly can with our budget and trying to accomplish our many initiatives."

While hopeful of accomplishing 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 Latin tactic for Meyer’s new staff. Normally, cabinet positions are appointed by the SGC-UP president, but following tradition 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 it will be brought up at nearly all SGC-UP forums has been safety. Other challenges that await Meyer and LaPointe include the integration of a new constitution, hiring a new government council, the Council of Student Organizations. With the challenges, LaPointe is confident in her administration.

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With elections over, the new executive board of University Park’s Student Government Council has been left with several challenges to face next year. “Every year you come in not knowing what’s going to happen,” said Matlyh Hernandez, SOC-UP president for the last year.

Arthur “AJ” Meyer and Paige LaPointe, president and vice president elect, will face budget cuts while trying to fulfill as many campaign promises as possible.

In a new effort to fight illiteracy among Latin American youth, FIU has partnered with Worldfund for the University’s first “Better World Books” book drive.

“Education is power,” said Office Manager of the Student Athlete Academic Center Helen Gonzalez, who is helping to organize the event.

Worldfund is an organization working to end poverty through high-quality educational opportunities. Founded just five years ago, the organization has already provided $50 million to 30,000 students in Latin America.

Gonzalez believes that Worldfund is a perfect organization for FIU students living in a Hispanic populated community. “A lot of us are Hispanic in one way or another,” she said.

Working in Academic Advising for student athletes, Gonzalez decided to use books that no longer had value for underprivileged students.

If FIU’s first Worldfund book drive is successful, Gonzalez will hold another drive next semester.

The Better World Books and Worldfund partnership has run book drive events at over 900 colleges and universities.

Donated books must be intact and contain to college course subjects. Trade paperbacks, highlighted books and textbooks are also accepted.

Collection sites are available at both University Park and Biscayne Bay campuses, as well as student housing.

While books will be available until April 25, the Student Athlete Academic Center will be collecting books throughout the year at Room 105C.

So you know...

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PARTING WITH SWEET SORROW

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 completed.

"There is a permit in Tallahassee and we are still waiting for that to come through," Olson said.

Cathy 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.

Arens said that if 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 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 part 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.

Cuts not a factor in departure

FERNANDEZ, page 1

"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 of 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.
Better knowledge of candidates needed

JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ
Contributing Writer

“We can do for me?” askedAlejandra Sanchez, a political science graduate student explaining why she did not vote in the recent student council elections this year. “No matter who is chosen, it won’t make a difference.”

What exactly took place in the very brief week that actually made us, the panther community, decide who would be our best representatives? What sparked this extent of apathy toward a council that so far controls over students’ money and services? Elections should be based on whether they are fair and the candidates’ opinions. Many students rightfully feel that they were not included in the campaign process and that there was a lack of focus on the issues. As a voter myself, I don’t want to be asked to vote for hopeless candidates without knowing who they are or what they stand for.

There is no doubt that charisma and popularity play an important role in people’s minds during political election. However, should we really start picking our candidates based on how many full-color flyers they print to promote their candidacy? I believe the candidates themselves, campaign managers and their friends. It would result in students who are academically successful.

For biology student Bridgette Gun, it is not a question of popularity, as she explained her reasons for not voting. “It’s not that I think they don’t 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. “Some within SGA have a different take on this issue of apathy, though. “Since [Gun] didn’t vote, her voice was not heard and she has a right to criticize individuals who devote their time to the student body,” said Kenneth Gelock, a senior in political science at FIU and an SGA representative.

Yet, whether success depends on the Greek life or popularity, the main concern for all running and voting can be simply said with the phrase “What’s in it for me?” Students on campus feel left out of the whole government process since they don’t have the time or money to belong to an expensive organization.

Belonging to the Greek life and other interest clubs seems to be a very effective method of persuading voters. Gelock admits that “I am a powerhouse in the elections.”

Transparency of funds would also help in case who is behind the scenes contributing to candidates. Budget limits on campaigning information. I have decided to be a very effective method of convincing voters. Gelock admits that “We are a powerhouse in the elections.”

Despite this sentiment, the voter turnout for this year skyrocketed in comparison to other years. This is fantastic, but we have a long way to go for the entire campus (or even most of it).

Although the whole election process was an amazing experience as a freshman at FIU, I believe that we still have room for improvement. When it comes to elections and deciding the student body representatives, we should look beyond face recognition and start becoming responsible voters.

We must educate ourselves about every candidate and ask ourselves what they plans are once elected. SGA should start to initiate real-life campaigning so that we can have a more democratic government that prepares our students for political life.

JASON GELLER
Contributing Writer

Smokestack fumes spewing from factories and carbon emissions spouting from Hummer tailpipes are threats to the environment. The amount of press they are receiving is the “green movement” growth.

What should be noted, though, is that there are other lesser-known evils plaguing the bio-

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.

In a study by Princetown University and the Woods Hole Research Center as reported in The Wall Street Journal, clear-cutting to make ethanol releases more harmful gases into the environment than supposedly harmful MTBE-based fuel used by many vehicles today.

Cows aren’t the only source of harmful carbon dioxide emissions – cow flatulence is even more harmful to the environment than speed racing cars. Livestock flatulence, livestock grazing and livestock rearing account for 18 percent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, according to a to 2006 report published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

The report also stated that about 65 percent of human-related nitrous oxide, which has 296 times the Global Warming Potential of CO2, comes from livestock manure. Livestock takes up 30 percent of the land’s surface.

In South America alone, about 70 percent of the Amazon has been demolished to make way for cow grazing. But cows aren’t the only cause of land degradation.

These harmful effects are perpetuated by the cravings of less prominent emitters of carbon, such as the harmful effects of livestock grazing as well as land degradation caused by overdevelopment.

The state needs even more land in the near future; South Florida’s population is expected to double in the next 50 years. This spells danger for alligators, bobcats and our very own golden palmettos.

But there is help. With more than $1.5 billion in donations, Florida Forever, a state program under the auspices of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, has protected 603,454 acres of land from being demolished. But the conservationist organization is expected to expire in 2010 and is desperately low on funds. If contractors continue developing over state land, 68 endangered plants and animals aren’t the only ones at risk. Overbuilding our communities isn’t just an eyesore; it also causes water problems.

If we “cover the surface with houses and pavement, then the rainwater and the surface water from the Everglades cannot get into the aquifer,” said FIU Earth Science Professor Dr. René M. Price. “The aquifer is where we get our drinking water from. If we continue development, we’re reducing the area that the aquifer can receive water.

Another organization working to preserve the land we live on is the Hold the Line coalition.

[Hold the Line] works to keep the urban development boundary right where it is,” said Adam Rivera, spokesperson for Environ. “If that boundary moves further west, that means there is development that can develop right where it was protected.”

Instead of overcoming over global warming might do to us in the next 100 years, let us focus on the land we live in now. We call ourselves the Sunshine State, but pretty soon we won’t have anything left to enjoy.

Want to go green?
Look beyond cars and gasoline use

JASON GELLER
Contributing Writer

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Instead of overcoming over global warming might do to us in the next 100 years, let us focus on the land we live in now. We call ourselves the Sunshine State, but pretty soon we won’t have anything left to enjoy.
Daylight was a small shimmer in the horizon, but the bright stage lights beckoned the musicians of Biatti to take the stage at the "Crocs Next Stop" college tour last week at FIU.

It was the band's first major stage performance, an experience they would call surreal in retrospect, but at that moment, their jitters were due to their hard work, chance and a little luck. "When you get to know us, you understand why we are jumping on stage like a bunch of animals, because we are all animals, especially Cat," Biatti said.

Felipe Biatti, lead singer

According to the band, their style has formed from a smorgasbord of influences, "80's and 90's rock, pop and jazz, not to mention Queen and The Beatles, have all added a splash of color to their stylistic repertoire." Although the songwriting is left to Felippe, and have a beer," he said. "We have been getting bigger and better every year, and this year we have really blown the doors off," said J. Hardy, co-owner of Victory Tradeshow Management and creator of EXXXotica.

"He came and haunted us for almost a year by default. A week before the concert, said Del Zoppo, the band signed to another tour, "I was responsible for arranging the concert at the Crocs Tour. The student organization Programming Council.

Sophia Del Zoppo, president of the Student Programming Council.

"We have been meeting weekly for a year, and finally transform into Biatti when they decided to "start something new, but doing something we love and delivering [music] to different people outside of church," Chang said in an email.

Biatti is a secular band whose songs most people can associate with life experience. "The band's guitarist, Tyler Milam, said the band is "fun, energetic, easy to relate to and catchy."

Felipe's reception after the Crocs Tour performance, the band's self-description seems on-point. There were also girls wearing grey T-shirts printed with the band's name walking around the soccer field, suggesting the band already has a following.

"Still, said Felippe, playing for college students can be intimidating, but it is the best experience out there. College students are the ultimate critics and "if they don't like it, they'll walk away and have a beer," he said. "At least at this university, Biatti seems to have passed the ice-cold beer music review."
FRIDAY • APRIL 18

WHAT: Jackie Gleason Theater of Miami Beach
WHERE: The Ring Theatre
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 6 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 7 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 7:30 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 8 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 10 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave

SATURDAY • APRIL 19

WHAT: Jackie Gleason Theater of Miami Beach
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WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
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WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
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WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave
WHAT: 10 p.m.
WHAT: Miami Beach, FL 33139
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at 1700 Collins Ave

SUNDAY • APRIL 20

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Courses - Summer 2008

Summer A:
56394 - AMH 4914 - South Florida History. Tu/Th, 11:00am–1:45pm
92621 - ANT 3451 - Anthropology of Race and Ethnicity. Tu/Th, 2:00pm–4:45pm
57365 - CPO 4057 - Political Violence and Revolution. Tu/Th, 11:00am–1:45pm

Summer B:
57002 - CPO 3304 - Politics of Latin America. Mon/Wed, 9:30am–12:45pm
52337 - ECS 1201 - Women, Culture, and Economic Development. On Line
57354 - GEA 3400 - Population and Geography of Latin America. Mon/Wed, 9:30–12:15
52359 - INR 3243 - International Relations of Latin America. Tu/Th, 3:30pm–6:15pm
56228 - SPW 3130 - Introduction to Spanish American Literature. Tu/Th, 3:00–4:40 pm

Summer C:
56637 - MUH 3541 - Music of Latin America: Folklore and Beyond. On Line
57099 - MUH 5546 - Music of the Americas. On Line

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First baseman Tyler Townsend was inches away from breaking a 9-9 tie in the bottom of the eighth inning. His line drive inches away from breaking a 9-9 tie in the their last 10 games, including two tenth-runners on the corners.

5 with one RBI and two runs scored. He also from a four-run defi cit by scoring three runs I'm pretty sure that we're going to turn this our pitching didn't hold up. It's OK though; was going to score for me, but unfortunately our team is fighting hard to win. It's a tough battle, but we're not giving up. We know that we have the potential to win, and we're going to do whatever it takes to make it happen.

But unfortunately our pitching didn’t hold up. It’s OK though; it’s just a part of the game. We know we have a talented team and we’re going to keep working hard to improve.

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

FIU trailed 9-5 in the latter part of the game before finally tallying 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 (2-1) picked up the win for Barry.

Sophomore Enrique Cepero was the designated hitter and went 2-for-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 flipped 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 nine-inning losses.

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 Ahrens. The hit was also his first collegiate start.

Ramos said, “It’s been a freak season, and you’ve seen some things that you normally don’t see.” Suarez said, “You just have to stay positive.”

Despite the struggles, Suarez does not believe this is a lot tougher job than he had expected.

“I knew that we had our work cut out for us and this team as a whole is operating on very few scholarships, so I have a lot of blue-collar guys,” he said. “I knew that we were going to have to do special things and play all the aspects of the game extremely well in order to compete and win.”

As it is quite obvious that the pitching woes have greatly contributed to the 12-27 record and the 7.20 ERA, Suarez mentioned that the brunt of the blame varied on any given night.

“It’s been a mixture [of the bullpen and the starters] to be honest with you, and there was a stretch almost three weeks ago that we had maybe eight quality starts, quality guys going into the seventh inning,” he said. “There were also times we were able to get quality starts, but a reliever came in and did a hell of a job.”

Overall, this has been a trying year for the squad, but the pitching truly has been the ultimate downfall. The offense has scored enough runs to win more than 12 games, but former coach Danny Price left the team with very few quality pitchers.

Suarez and Thomas we’ve dealt a bad hand, and they won’t be able to see the results of their recruiting for a few years to come. It is too soon to place the blame on Thomas and Suarez for the team’s shaky pitching performance this season.

Suarez has appeared to acknowledge that this year has not panned out the way he would have hoped, but he believes that this project still has a lot of work to be completed.