Leatherman is a professor at FIU Athletics, University. His passion for science and nature led to the creation of the biggest sandbox in the world,” Leatherman said.

“I loved it,” Leatherman said. “I was the sand king.”

At age six, Leatherman saw the beach for the first time, an experience that would later inspire him to write the best beaches in America. At the time, Leatherman was on his way to China for a trip, but after being pressured by the editor of the magazine, Leatherman jotted down a list of the best beaches he remembered and considered superior.

“I didn’t think much about it until the telephone began to ring,” Leatherman said in his book, “America’s Best Beaches.”

TOP 10 BEACHES OF 2008
1. Coronado Beach
2. Kauai, Hawaii
3. Outer Banks, North Carolina
4. Cape Florida State Park
5. Key Biscayne, Florida
6. Matunuck State Beach
7. Hamoa Beach
8. Cape Henlopen State Park
9. Miami Beach
10. Cape Florida State Park

University ranks at the top for Hispanics

JULIO MENACHE
Contributing Writer

FIU awarded the top bachelor degrees to Hispanics in the United States in 2007, according to Hispanic Outlook on Higher Education Magazine. The magazine analyzed the number of Hispanic four-year graduates from a sampling of universities across the country and compiled a list of the top 100 schools. FIU ranked first with a total of 3,169 graduates, nearly 1,020 more graduates than the second ranked school, the University of Texas Pan American and 2,069 more students than the third ranked school, the University of Texas at El Paso.

The seal previously used in the logo has been replaced by a new design that features the words Florida International University, and the seal now uses the font type “more traditionally collegiate,” according to Maria Elena Villar, assistant professor of advertising and public relations.

For the potential University logo, under the letters “FLU” are the words Florida International University. The words Florida International are written in larger letters to represent FIU’s multicultural focus. The seal used previously in the logo has been dropped and will be used only for official documents such as diplomas or contracts, according to a press release sent out by University President Modesto Maidique.

Updated panther marks its territory on revamped logo

CHRISTINA VEIGA
Asst. News Director

FIU spent the summer working on its image, which culminated in the revelation of new logos last month. University mascot Roary Rage got a makeover through a fresh new logo from the Athletics department. The emblem features a “stronger” and “more aggressive” panther according to John O’Meara, director of marketing for Athletics.

The University also released a draft of a potential new logo design that encompasses the University entirely.

Both logos feature the acronym “FLU” in block, blue and gold letters. The font type is “more traditionally collegiate,” according to Maria Elena Villar, assistant professor of advertising and public relations.

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University unveils logo to community

LOGO, page 1

also been simplified, shedding the shield background and tall grasses previously shown. The panther was also reworked, with the new logo featuring both front legs and an open mouth, bearing teeth. “We tried to get the panther coming out at you, with FIU’s tight budget in mind, the change to the new logos will be gradual. “We’re not asking people to throw anything away — that would be a waste of money. It’s just when people order new supplies, they’d have the new logos,” said Madigue in the press release.

Athletics decided to change its logo to represent a new era in the department, which has most recently come about due to personnel changes, according to O’Meary. “It’s not just about Athletics. Part of this new brand is winning on and off the field — when compared to other local universities, FIU’s relatively low tuition costs make it less of a burden on their bank accounts. “For me UM was just too expensive,” Varona said.

Ralph Cabanas, who was awarded his bachelor’s degree in business administration in Fall 2007, was not surprised by the high number of Hispanic graduates at the University of Miami and Barry University. “I believe Hispanics have that innate desire to stay close to their families,” Cabanas said, whose family originally hails from Cuba. “I chose to stay at FIU because it was close to home.”

Cabanas, like many students, looked at FIU’s low tuition costs and its close proximity to Miami, but he also looked at some of FIU’s other strengths. “[FIU] has a top business school and the University is still growing,” said Cabanas. With Hispanics making up such a large part of the FIU student body, some argue that FIU may need more diversity in its college campus.

But graduates like Cabanas come to FIU’s current student body to how it was during their early years and see vast differences. “I remember when I was a freshman in 2004, FIU had a huge amount of Hispanic students. Now I see that the University has become more diverse, with students from all sorts of backgrounds. FIU is growing and truly living up to its namesake of being an international university,” Cabanas said.

Professor takes work to the beach

were regarded as one of the greatest beaches in the country.

It was then that Leatherman realized the importance of such a list for Americans who wished to become more informed about U.S. beaches. Leatherman then decided to devise a rating system for beaches. The list of the top 10 U.S. beaches is now published annually. Every year, Leatherman recounts 650 major recreational beaches in the nation and, aided with his own research, selects 10 that demonstrate excellent qualities.

He rates beaches based on 50 criteria points including air and water temperature, color of sand, color of water, number of sunny days and rip currents.

The beaches that place first on the list one year are retired for the next to give other beaches the opportunity to receive the top mark. Beaches that are in second place one year can certainly make it to first place the following year. However, this may not be the case because of several factors. “All sorts of things happen each year to each beaches that affect their rating,” said Leatherman. Thanks to the popularity of his list, Leatherman has been featured in segments on CNN News and FOX News. He has also made several appearances on the Travel Channel.

He has been quoted in publications such as National Geographic, Sports Illustrated, Condé Nast Traveler, and has appeared in “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in a special program about the best jobs in America. Besides this list, Leatherman also enjoys his day-to-day work researching storm impacts and analyzing beach erosion.

“Dr. Beach is an alter ego of mine, it is the icing on the cake,” Leatherman said. “But as hurricane researchers we are making a difference for the community.”

Leatherman is currently the chairperson and director of the International Hurricane Research Center at FIU, a multidisciplinary research and education center with the purpose of mitigating and preventing damage from hurricanes. It also assists communities in dealing with the aftermath of tropical storms and hurricanes.

For more information visit www.drbeach.org or www.ihrc.fiu.edu.

FALSE ALARM

SPLAS: The City of Miami ruled in favor of FIU alumni Emily Vogel, who filed a lawsuit in 2003 for unlawful search and seizure by Broward Sheriff’s Office. After noticing suspicious modestos, BSO destroyed a can of paint in Vogel’s car. For the full story, visit www.FIUSM.com

HISPANICS, page 1

international business in 2007. “It’s a great honor, but [FIU’s] location plays a huge role. If this were a northern state such as North Dakota, then it would come as more of a surprise.”

According to the last U.S. Census, Hispanics comprise nearly 20 percent of Florida’s overall population and 65 percent of Miami’s population.

Out of the more than 38,000 students who attended the University, 34,773 are Florida residents. Combined with the fact that FIU is a commuter school makes it a prime destination for local South Floridians who wish to stay close to home.

According to FIU’s 2007 fact book, the official head count of the student body since Fall 2007 is 38,290. Hispanics make up more than half of the student population as the largest ethnic group on campus with 22,769 students.

In comparison, the University of Miami, with a student population of nearly 15,000, has a Hispanic population of 3,000 students.

The University of Florida, the largest public university in the state, has a student population of more than 51,000, but less than 6,000 Hispanic students. When compared to other Miami-area schools, FIU had four times more Hispanic graduates than the University of Miami and Barry University.

Besides its location, many Miami residents like Varona also chose FIU because when compared to other local universities, FIU’s relatively low tuition costs make it less of a burden on their
A cooler Roary makes his debut at the Bay

EDITH SEVILLA
Staff Writer

She’s been in office for little more than a month, but already Kenasha Paul is making changes. Paul, who has been in-

fluenced her decision to attend journalism at FIU’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication. “I've done so many interviews that I wanted to be on the other side. That's why I chose journalism.”

Since then, she has gone from singing in competitions, Spanish-lang-

uage musicals, and at 13 started writing her own music and playing the piano. She learned guitar at 17.

“My parents are not stage parents by any means. They never pushed me into singing. I was just so in love with it that they always supported me,” Alvarez said.

Since 2006, Alvarez has been working on her new album "A paso de mi Amor," featuring the single, "Cristina," featuring the single, “A paso de mi Amor.”

When I heard my first single on the radio I couldn’t believe it was me. I always knew I wanted to be a recording artist, I just didn’t think it would happen so soon,” Alvarez said.

At 15, Alvarez signed with Sony International’s Sony Discos to record her first Spanish-language record. “Ana Cristina,” featuring the single, “Am I Paso de mi Amor.”

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“Because it was hot outside and summer, the costume was extremely hot and I was sweating a lot,” Georges said. “While I was wearing the costume, I didn’t smell anything, but once I got out of it, I was like ‘whoa.’ The rest of the day I smelled bad.”

Paul partially credits this success to her experience as president of Panther Power and the relationship she had with Athletics.

Paul’s work history includes time as director of legislative affairs from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, Panther Power president from Spring 2006 to Spring 2008 and Campus Life board chair dur-

ing Fall 2007.

Paul, who has been in-

olved with SGA since the summer of 2005, said she plans to find out what issues concern students.

“I’m not sure exactly the plan of how we’re going to knock them out but at least knowing the issues is my first step,” Paul said.

Because Paul was not elected by the student body, she will run for vice president in October when the position becomes available again dur-

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So much to see:

Panther Power gave away free mini footballs, pens and wristlets (top), Science club’s vice president Lorilee Valenti and member Christian Jeanlott demonstrate chemical reactions (middle), and local band On a Square performs during SGC-BBC’s June 2 club fair.

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Her mother Teresa knows that it is not easy for Alvarez, but is confident that she will succeed.

“A word of advice to all the aspiring singers out there is to never give up,” she said. “It takes a lot of energy, planning and emphasis,” she said.

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John McCain: A spitting image!

I AM NOT A CROOK!

WILL NOT LEAD US TO WAR...

Mc Cain '08

CHRIS CABRAL
Staff Writer

Both of our two most likely choices for the White House this year bear striking historical comparisons to past leaders.

While Sen. Barack Obama is older than John F. Kennedy was when he moved into the Oval Office in 1960, the presumptive Democratic nominee does share the late President’s oral eloquence and barrier breaking biog-

raphy, with Kennedy being the first Catholic President and Obama vying to be the first African American.

Yet it is Obama’s opponent’s similarity to Richard Nixon that may very well swing the election in the Democrats favor.

John McCain has often been com-
pared to our incumbent, George W. Bush, and while the two have been close allies over the past eight years, with McCain voting with Bush 95 percent of the time last year, accord-

ing to the Congressional Quarterly, McCain’s record evokes a quote from J.F.K., who 48 years ago critiqued his opponent, Nixon, as he accepted the Democratic nomination.

“We know it will not be easy to campaign against a man who has spoken and voted on every side of every issue,” Kennedy is quoted as saying.

George Bush and his campaign team, with John Kerry as a “flip-

flapper” in 2004, yet Kerry, for all his political flaws, wasn’t nearly as inconsistent as his opponents made him out to be. John McCain, by con-

trast, is almost forced to contradict himself.

McCain, after all, offered a glowing endorsement of Bush and his policies in 2004.

McCain, disturbingly, often tries to sound like he’s become more like the Democrats in a deceptive attempt to win votes.

“So the most important issues of our day, I’ve been totally in agree-

ment and support of President Bush,” McCain said in an interview on Meet


So, like Nixon, McCain is being forced to try to defeat a charismatic oppen-

ent. McCain, disturbingly, of-

ten tries to sound like he’s become more like the Democrats in a de-

ceptive attempt to win votes. With

high gas prices squeezing millions of Americans, he was quoted in the New York Sun on June 13 stating to a crowd, “I am very angry, frankly, at the oil companies.”

Yet his bout of progressive popu-

lism was short lived.

A few days later he was in Houston, criticizing Obama in front of

executives from big oil companies, declaring his support for sacrific-

ing the coasts of Florida for drilling, something he had long opposed.

In a television ad, McCain de-

clares his hatred for war, despite his longstanding support for the Iraq War.

Despite having voted with the president’s position 95 percent of the time last year, he’s attempting to claim he’s not like Bush. Despite a zero percent rating from the League of Conservation Voters on environ-

mental issues, he’s claiming to be “green.” Despite his commitment to

staying in Iraq, he talks about his ha-

rred of war.

In 1968, Nixon faced an electorate unprepared for the war and promised “peace with honor.” Once elected, he promptly escalated the war and expanded the fighting into Cambodia.

He kept the war going for five more years. McCain would likely use a similar strategy for Iraq. Democrats and Independents alike must fight to ensure that Americans elect the Kennedy-like Obama, before McCain has the chance to become the 21st century Nixon.

Chris Cabral is president of FIU College Democrats

History repeating in ‘08 election

OPINION

Athletics takes the steps necessary to keep progress scores above the national average

Although long over due, the Athletics department is begin-

ning to take the NCAA’s allega-

tions that it “lacks institutional control” seriously.

For the past two years, FIU has been hit with penalties from

the NCAA for poor academic progress rate (APR) scores, mis-

applying financial aid and allow-

ing ineligible student-athletes to compete in competition.

APR scores are used to measure how well Division I stu-

dent-athletes are performing academically during a four-year period. If a team scores less than 925 consistently, the NCAA’s punishments can range from scholarship losses to termina-

tion from Division I.

From 2003 to 2007, men’s basketball, football, baseball, men’s track and women’s swim-

ming scored under 925.

Even though Athetics has in-

stalled various support systems to help student-athletes succeed while at FIU, students continue to fail. Since APR scores are cal-

culated during a four-year peri-

od, it may take sometime for the cumulative scores to improve.

But the department is head-

ing in the right direction in ad-

dressing the problem by hir-

ing additional compliance officers, giving more athletics resources at the Student-Athlete Academic Center and hiring an APR specialist.

Going to such extremes is the only way to make this problem go away. If the problem persists, the NCAA can ban teams from postseason completion or even relegate it to Division II status.

Being downgraded back to Division II would be a major blow to a University that has in-

vested so much money into ad-

vancing its athletics program.

By focusing so much atten-

tion on Athletics, the University is hoping for a return on its initial investment in the future. Here are just some expenses:

a new stadium, a new logo, new coaches, new equipment, support staff and the Student-

Athlete Academic Center.

Even though coaches may be frustrated with APR scores, it helps student-athletes get help in the classroom. This ultimate-

ly holds the coaches and their players to higher standards.

APR ensures that student-

athletes gain an education along the way, since many crit-

ics argue that schools use athlet-

ics as a means of producing a he-

creative revenue stream, without student-

athlete seeing a penny for their labors.

On the other hand, universi-

ties argue that student-athletes are being rewarded with a de-

gree they are earning while in college.

Unless APR scores begin to be taken seriously, the value of these degrees will always be held in question.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FCAT article presents misfacts amid its irrelevance

Juan Carlos Sanchez’s FCAT article was reporting on a moot point, if only because no one at FIU (except education majors) is affected by this topic.

“We know it will not be easy to campaign against a man who has spoken and voted on every side of every issue,” Kennedy is quoted as saying.

“On the most important issues of our day, I’ve been totally in agree-

ment and support of President Bush,” McCain said in an interview on Meet The Press on June 19, 2005.

So, like Nixon, McCain is being forced to try to defeat a charismatic oppen-

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SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor can be sent to opinion@fiusm.com. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words and include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/ department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.

RESPONSE FROM THE WRITER

Standardized test is pertinent to current FIU students

Even though it was created in 1999, the influence of Ignite on the public school system is obvious.

It was specifically designed to assist the standardized testing that currently takes place in public schools today.

The company plans to sell its software at a price of $30 per pupil per year, ac-

cording to democracynow.org.

In regards to no one in FIU being af-

fected, that is highly questionable.

Many students already have children attending public schools.

If not, once graduated they will have

children.

FCAT is not a moot point or “piece of history.”

This is an election year in which vot-

chers are being re-considered after the state Supreme Court banned them.

Now is the time to hold legislators ac-

countable for their actions and remove them if necessary.

Juan Carlos Sanchez Contributing Writer
Upon entering, guests get greeted by white leather couches and a crystal chandelier which are separated from the black dining area by large mirrors arranged at different angles. Behind the bar are two screens playing comedies from the golden age of cinema. The walls are littered with memorable movie quotes such as “May the force be with you,” “I’m the king of the world!” and “Yo, Adrien.”

Aside from its décor, CinéBistro differs from regular “movies-only” locales in that it is more sophisticated than a typical cinema in Dolphin Mall, just north of University Park. Although CinéBistro, a movie-theater/restaurant hybrid, is located next to Dolphin in the mall’s original cinema — it caters to a different audience.

Because of issues with its liquor license, CinéBistro can only allow people 21 and older to watch a movie — the restaurant is open to anyone. Senior Stephanie Araujo, a political science major, is eager to try out this new experience. “I can’t wait to go because you’ll get it all in one spot. You don’t need to stress about where to go on a night out,” she said.

The cost of watching a movie at CinéBistro is $15 on weekdays and $17 on weekends which includes valet parking.

The prices for meals vary almost as much as the assorted selections on the menu. It ranges from $5 for ham croquettes to $25 for an entree of tournedos, which are small, round meat tenderloins with mushrooms. The Dolphin Mall location is the first in the country, however, Cobb is opening new locations in Tampa, Daytona Beach and Alabama in the near future.

For more information, call (305) 455-7373 or visit http://www.cinebistro.com/.
Sean William Scott looks for life after 

Pie

STEVEN MESA
Contributing Writer

Two mid-level supermarket employees, one managerial position. Sean William Scott faces off with John C. Reilly in a battle of wits in the new movie written by Steve Conrad (The Pursuit of Happyness), The Promotion.

As a fan of Conrad’s work, Scott came on board for The Promotion because he enjoys the comedy that Conrad’s script delivered. “His comedy comes from his voice and how he writes about human struggle, work, relationships and I really enjoy that,” Scott said.

A side from being a fan of Conrad, Scott is also a fan of his co-star’s work. “Reilly’s performance is so unique and beautiful that he should be nominated”, Scott said. “I may be exaggerating, but I think he is so great in this movie.”

Recently, Scott has said that he cannot wait his performance in his movies Mr. Woodcock and The Dukes of Hazzard because both movies were terrible. “It is important to think that not all movies you were in were great”, Scott said.

In regards to The Dukes of Hazzard, in which he co-starred with John C. Reilly, Scott said the movie should have been num-churier than the final cut that came out in the summer of 2005. “The movie should have been like how guys really talked with me and Johnny but we were kind of handcuffed due to the PG-13 rating,” he said.

“I imagine the movie will be a decade since the first American Pie was shot. This became the launching pad to Scott’s career with the role of Steve Stifler, the over-sexed hound dog who always found himself in the most disgusting situations. Since then, Scott has been in the first two American Pie se-

You can kind of coast for a while, but at the end of the day you need a movie that needs to make some money. — Sean William Scott

GO TEAM

Greek Affairs seeks to expel stereotypes

Kassandra Pool
Staff Writer

Promiscuous girls, scandals, cheaters, hazing and party animals – no, it’s not an episode from MTV’s “True Life,” just the typical stereotypes many identify with fraternities and sororities.

To put these myths and labels to rest, the Office of Greek Affairs established the Greek Orientation team, more commonly known as the GO Team.

For the past seven years, a team of about 15 to 20 students has been selected to represent Greek Affairs during freshmen orientation. Incoming freshman might remember seeing the team dressed in green polos presenting experiences about Greek Life during Get a Life.

Team leader Melissa Sabatier joined the GO team in the hopes of dispelling Greek stereotypes. “A lot of people say we are party animals and cheaters who have test banks. Our purpose above all is to squash these stereotypes and to prove to those who are incoming freshmen or already on campus that we are more then what a lot of people think we are,” Sabatier said.

In May, the team began putting together a video for incoming students at orientation. The film high-lights how joining a fraternity or sorority will make a difference in a student’s life.

The group has been given the opportunity to input ideas and visions regarding how they want to present Greek life to incoming freshmen.

This year, the team will be focusing on preparing to present first year experience classes, setting information tables throughout the University and possibly presenting at high schools for future students. From capturing an audience of any-
Recruits build athletic programs, logos do not

BONILLA, page 8

The Leprechaun has been putting up his dukes for the University since 1965. The storied athletics program saw its variety of mascots and logos before sidestepping the Leprechaun as the official logo.

Before 1965, the University still won seven of its 11 football national championships. But it is not the team’s mascot or logo.

Notre Dame Football has won the most national championships in NCAA history, over 100 years of tradition and no season with more than 9 losses.

Easy, the logo isn’t putting on a uniform and playing for the team. That attracts up and coming football prospects to Notre Dame is not the team’s mascot or logo. It’s the team’s history and reputation for winning.

Notre Dame Football has won the most national championships in NCAA history, over 100 years of tradition and no season with more than 9 losses.

Those types of facts draw good players to Notre Dame, not the silly logo. Last season’s team posted a 3-9 record, the worst in the program’s history. Where was the Leprechaun to save them in 2008?

Perhaps Head Coach Charlie Weiss’ fortunes will change once he transforms the University add vampire teeth to the logo and rolls up the Leprechaun’s sleeves a ½ inch down to show the athletics program means business. Maryland: Turtles look so lethargic and friendly, nothing can make them menacing. Adding muscles just makes them look even goofier.

The University of Maryland logo is the school’s mascot, Testudo, a huge diamondback terrapin with Arnold Schwarzenegger-sized muscles and a cross between a smile and scowl. His huge pectorals are complemented by his serious pose, hands on his waist.

Every toddler recognizes that pose, Testudo looks like a mom scolding her young child. Not exactly a distraction or problem for visiting teams.

The program has managed to win 16 total national championships using the same logo. Most recently the men’s and women’s basketball teams hoisted the championship trophy in 2002 and 2006 respectively.

Not changing the logo is a way to build tradition. When a university is constantly changing its identity, recruits and fans alike have trouble associating one logo to the school.

Maryland decided to keep the “mean” and silly logo for many years, but it’s what represents the University’s athletic program now and forever.

Whether it’s a sissy bird, crazy old leprechaun or steroid-filled turtle, logos represent winning programs, but should not be altered in an attempt to create them.

APR policy forces academic compliance effort reform

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A: I have been really hard to break my bad habits. I am trying to get more sleep because school makes me miss out on a lot of sleep time. The books are always first, but now that I have graduated, I am trying to sleep as much as possible.

Q: How does it feel to represent not only FIU, but also the Cayman Islands at the Olympics?

A: It feels like a dream to me. To know that I’m going to be representing FIU and my country at these games, is a one in a lifetime opportunity. Many of the guys that I’ve competed against this year probably will not make it to these games for various reasons. This is an opportunity that is not to be taken lightly.

Q: Describe the emotion you felt after getting injured right after making the qualifying time at Drak?

A: I was really disappointed at not making the Olympics. I was just hoping that it was not too bad to the point where it would affect me drastically. I was just praying that it would get better by resting it, and it did. So, I am really grateful.

Q: Medal or no medal, what are your plans after the Olympics?

A: After the Olympics, my plans are to go pro. I love track and field to the point that it has become a major part of my life. I would do it all day long if I had the energy. Besides my family and my girlfriend, it’s what I love most.

To keep competing for my country is something that I’m obligated to do, not just for myself, but for the up and coming youth that might not have that guidance that they need. Mostly, I want to give them someone and something to look up to as a role model.

FACE-TO-FACE: Members of the FIU men’s basketball team (left to right) Badara Ndiaye, Nikola Gacesa, Harley Fuller and Josue Soto play a pick up game at the FIU Arena on June 26.

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You would really like to try to get my time down to 13.4 seconds. I really feel that I can do it, but it’s just a matter of time and weather conditions.

Q: Who has been your biggest supporter on this journey? How?

A: My biggest supporter through all of this has mostly been my dad. Not only has he been the main financial backbone through this whole thing, but he is worse than a girl sometimes when it comes to bragging that he has a son that is an Olympian — but how can I blame him?

FIU and its athletic staff has also done wonders for me. My head coach, Eric Campbell, has been the one man crew that got me to get so far ahead in so little amount of time. He did this not only on the track, but in the books also. My girlfriend has also been one of my biggest supporters through all of this. She helps me to find answers to questions that I sometimes can’t answer myself.

Q: What has your training consisted of over the last two months?

A: My training has consisted of very fast repetitions of handling and sprint work. I have cut down the gym and weight room so I don’t tire my muscles. I need to keep them strong. Campbell and I have been working on trying to keep me at my peak performance for the months leading up to the Olympics. We want to try to have me run my fastest time at the Olympics, when it really matters most.

Q: Are there any habits you need to break as you move to this next level of competition?

A: I need to keep them strong. Campbell and I have been working on trying to keep me at my peak performance for the months leading up to the Olympics. We want to try to have me run my fastest time at the Olympics, when it really matters most.


Father, girlfriend lead track star’s cheering bandwagon
FIU GRADUATE QUALIFIES FOR OLYMPICS

Track star discusses training, life after Beijing

AURDINA BIGOS
Contributing Writer

Caymanian Ronald Forbes, a recent FIU graduate, qualified to represent the Cayman Islands in the 110-meter hurdles at the 2008 Olympics.

Forbes joined the track team at FIU in 2005 after being scouted and given a full athletic scholarship out of Bacone College. He battled injuries throughout his entire FIU career but now, all his dedication has clench a spot in Beijing.

On June 13, Forbes clocked 13.625 seconds in the semi-final round at Nationals, beating the 13.72 second mark needed to attain the Olympic qualifying standard. Forbes was only .44 of a second behind the NCAA record of 13.21 run by Aries Merritt in 2006.

Unfortunately, he slightly re-aggravated an injury during the race, which hindered him in the finals, as he finished eighth with a time 14.05 seconds.

Forbes is still training and competing until he travels to Beijing later this summer.

Forbes Q&Q: A: What has been your biggest obstacle on your journey to Beijing?
B: Some of the biggest obstacles that I’ve had on my journey would be injuries. They really kept me from learning some of the critical skills I need to know in order to run this event. I not only had to deal with the physical despair of the injury, but also the mental frustration because of me not being able to do many of the things others could do.

Q: What expectations do you have going into the hurdles at the Olympics?
A: At the Olympics, my goal is to make it through as many rounds as possible. I really don’t want to get knocked out in the first round. One of the main things I want to accomplish in China is to better my current personal best time.

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New logo creates menacing facade, won’t bring national championships

Everyone knows that friend in high school who tries way too hard to be tough.

This friend is in fact very delicate, but just like that misguided friend, the Florida International University Athletics logo changed from a golden panther, to one with intense eyes, fangs showing and claws out.

In other words, the Athletics Department is trying to scare their way to intimidating opponents with its logo instead of with its recruits.

There is no correlation between intimidating logos and successful athletic programs. Yet FIU President Alfredo A. Maldonado stresses that the logo’s block letters represent strength and the new panther reflects the University’s aggressiveness.

As logical as that sounds, several universities have embarrassing logos, but still managed to win national championships and garner top recruits season after season.

Here are three examples of those types of schools:

Kansas - Who knew “Woody the Wood Pecker” and “Big Bird” had a love child? One look at the University of Kansas Jayhawk and you’ve discovered crazy bird meets Sesame Street.

The logo went through several transformations from 1912-1946 until finally deciding on the current logo in 1947.

During the years Kansas was changing the logo to some hostile, angry-looking Jayhawk, the athletics program won zero national championships in any sport.

After adopting the smiling, gentle Jayhawk, the University has won 10 national championships in four sports.

The Jayhawks won their most recent title in 2008, when the men’s basketball team brought home the division I national championship.

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Academic rules affect coaches’ jobs

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Editor

There was a time when the NCAA didn’t have such strict academic regulations.

A time before academic reform efforts changed the standards division I programs had to meet.

Men’s basketball coach Sergio Rouco can explain:

“As coaches, we are cleaning up the program academically, while trying to win games,” he said.

Since the APR (academic progress rate) was instituted in 2003, athletic programs have had to live up to a higher academic standards for their student-athletes.

The APR system is an assessment of academic performance that gives points to teams based on student-athletes reaching academic eligibility.

A score of 925 during a four-year span is needed in order to appease the NCAA, something FIU was not able to do in basketball, football, baseball, men’s track and women’s swimming from 2003-2007, all five teams scored under 925.

As a result of the low scores, FIU lost more scholarships than any other team in division I in 2007 and lost more than $2 million in scholarships in 2008.

Rouco believes that the new rules are in the best interest of the student-athletes and education, but has made it more difficult for coaches to keep their jobs.

“HARSH”

“The APR started the year I came here in 2003, so it’s worked. We are frustrated as coaches because they threw something at us as an experiment, but while they tweak it as we along some coaches are losing their jobs,” Rouco said. “You should have something established if you’re having a rule so harsh.”

With some coaches paying for the failures of previous administrations, it has become harder to survive as a division I coach in Rouco’s opinion.

The athletic department has gone through seven coaches in the last two years, four of those coaches were fired. Rouco, who is 42-74 in four seasons as head coach, hasn’t changed the way he has recruited because of FIU’s emphasis on academics.

“Are you more pro-student than any other institution I have been at? Miami is a city where kids have to be academically oriented. They can be easily distracted,” he said. “I never changed with me.”

Despite the University’s stress on academics over the years, the football, baseball and men’s basketball teams need to score at least 900 next year or they will face postseason ban.

And if they do not score at least 900 the following year, the programs will be banned from division I and the Football Bowl Subdivision.

As a result of the severe consequences low APR scores may bring, Monique Garcia was hired roughly three months ago to serve as an APR specialist, one of the

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