Online Fees Cut
State moving toward more online classes

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO
News Director

As recent national trends show students flocking to online courses due to increasing gas prices, FIU students have more reason to migrate online as a new state law has forced the University to lower online tuition fees for the 2008-09 school year.

Previously, FIU’s $299 fee paid for faculty travel as well as the development and delivery of the University’s online courses, said Joyce Elam, vice provost of FIU Online. The new law limits online fees to cover only operational costs.

“The price of gas will make [online courses] more attractive,” said Elam. “But our courses have been full in the past even before the economy went into its tailpipe.”

For the fall semester, the reduction translates to a $199 fee for a three-credit online course, but Elam does not believe the charge ever deterred students considering online classes in the first place.

Enrollment at FIU has grown exponentially since the program’s inception in 1999 and has peaked to 37,000 students in 2007-08, Elam said.

FIU’s numbers reflect a statewide trend. Enrollment in the same period reached a total of 290,000 students in 10 state universities.

As well as regulating online fees, the still nameless bill establishes the Florida Distance Learning Task Force. The Task Force will be building an entrepreneurship center somewhere else.”

This is Renko’s second doctoral thesis. In 2006, she has earned a Doctor of Science degree in the field of marketing in international business at the Turku School of Economics. Her current research focuses on predicting and explaining the failures and successes of high potential startup ventures based on technology.

“The university has always been extremely supportive of my research interests, and I have received both great guidance as well as financial support,” Renko said. “Maybe one day I will be building an entrepreneurship center somewhere else.”

The University decided to partner with Miami-Dade in order to enhance the emergency response system currently in place at the University.

“The system is more efficient than other means of communication like e-mail alerts,” said Director of Media Relations Maydel Santana-Bravo. “The e-mail alerts take about four hours to send, where in the case of text messages it takes only minutes, which could help save countless lives and hours of confusion.”

According to Santana-Bravo, although the system is more efficient and helpful in crisis situations, it does not allow for two-way communication between the recipient of an alert and emergency officials. Santana-Bravo said that when Miami-Dade County acquired this new technology, they offered it to municipalities and schools throughout the county.

“The university has been offered to FIU for free by Miami-Dade County,” Santana-Bravo said.

Emergency officials, including campus police, housing and other departments, have added a link to the FIU Web site and registration page for the upcoming fall. All phone numbers entered will be stored in a massive database that allows for emergency officials to send out mass text messages at a moment’s notice.

The system would be used to notify students of not only school closures due to hurricanes and other natural disasters, but also informal students of other emergencies on campus.

University officials hope that the new system will dispel the potential mass confusion students experience during a hurricane threat as well as save lives in the event of a violent tragedy, like Virginia Tech.

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The University decided to partner with Miami-Dade in order to enhance the emergency response system currently in place at the University.

“I think it’s great that administrators are taking campus safety seriously,” said sophomore Felix Rodriguez. “It shows that [the University is] apparently taking all the steps it can to make sure this campus is safe.”

This new system is one of the many tools emergency officials use to get crucial time-sensitive information out to the public. These tools include emergency phones in every classroom, loudspeakers for emergency broadcasts and urgent e-mail alerts to the University community.

To register for the new text messaging system, visit http://text.solutions@fiu.edu.
FIU entrepreneur snaggs second Ph.D.

RENO, page 1

Organizational Research. Founded in 2003 with a grant from the Kauffman Foundation, the entrepreneurial program provides campus-wide awareness of entrepreneurship as an approach to life that enhances and transcends traditional academic experiences, according to its Web site. The entrepreneurship Center promises to “address the unique entrepreneurial needs of one of the nation’s largest ethnically diverse academic institutions.” It received its name from Eugenio Pino, a Cuban-American serial entrepreneur and his family. Renko agrees with the center’s sentiment.

“My [the professors] are extremely well connected in the academia, which has been very helpful when applying to different kinds of consortia and scholarships,” Renko said. “Also, I taught many entrepreneurs when applying to different kinds of funding.”

Renko currently teaches two classes at FIU, “Developing Entrepreneurial Alternatives” and “Entrepreneurial Teams.”

The program encourages to be coupled with the student’s career path to open more possibilities in the future. The advertisements in the Green Library display several of the alumni entrepreneurs who have done exactly that. The program has been combined with the likes of investor, producer, educator, attorney, dancer, journalist and several others.

There are three Ph.Ds currently in the program; two in adult education and the other in economics.

“A Ph.D. program is a lot of work,” said Renko. “It helps if you are serious [about] a lot of different kinds of phenomena. I think the successful senior professors that I have observed have all one characteristic in common - academic curiosity.”

"While these are tough times for the University, Carrud stated that the program is “battling the budget crisis,” adding that it is a “stable program.”

For more information, visit the program’s Web site can be found at http://entrepreneurship.fiu.edu/.

The office is located at University Park in Vierges House, room 130.

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

WEDNESDAY • JULY 23
Last Day To Drop Summer Classes: 5 p.m.
SIGA Council Meeting: 2 p.m., GC 150
Music Saves Lives General Meeting: 1 p.m, GC 314

THURSDAY • JULY 24
Truth Of Life, Bible Study: Noon, AMC sunset place
Nicaraguan Student Association General Meeting: 5:30 p.m., GC 340
Cuban American Student Association General Meeting: 7 p.m., GC 343

FRIDAY • JULY 25
Accounting Association Meeting: 7:00 p.m., GC 150
Pantherage presents Heatstroke: 1:00 p.m., The Housing Quad

SATURDAY • JULY 26
Butterfly Days at Fairchild: 9:30 a.m., Coral Gables 200
Brian Mcknight and Tamia: 8 p.m., Bank Atlantic Center

MONDAY • JULY 28
Fall registration begins: 8 a.m., – Compiled by Rosalyn Delgado

DUCk, DUCK...

GOOSE! Young students run around the Graham Center Pit in a game of “Duck, Duck, Goose.”

JUAN PRADO
Staff Writer

Students who visit the popular Web site RateMyProfessors.com find comments like “Didn’t learn anything in this class!” or “Great professor; makes class so much fun.”

For many students, the site serves as a vehicle to post comments about their professors’ teaching styles.

But what students may not realize is how powerful their opinions can be; these comments can have an effect on the professors who read them, as well as on students who take the site into consideration when registering for classes.

According to the Web site, Rate My Professors is the largest listing of college professor ratings available on the Internet. Since its inception in 1999, it has grown to showcase over one million comments on professors from 6,000 schools across the United States, Canada, England, Scotland and Wales.

“I think that some of the comments are misleading or unfair to some professors, as ‘not too serious students’ or students with biased opinions about a teacher may be easily inserted,” said FIU political science professor Bertin Kouadio.

While some professors avoid reading comments about themselves on the Web because they consider them irrelevant, others can internalize these comments, which results in changes of teaching styles and classroom interaction.

“If the professor or the student felt they had a different idea, they could take actions against the students in many ways,” said Ricardo Portillo, a retired psychologist.

According to Portillo, professors who read the comments posted on the site are subject to possible effects that can be either positive or negative, and that can result in the professors changing their methods of teaching in several ways.

“Bad comments can result in harder exams, tougher attitude in class and less turnout of students; while good comments can translate into easier tests, more dedication to the class and a higher turnout of students,” Portillo said.

RateMyProfessors.com was created with the purpose of helping students with their class schedules as well as to serve as an oportun- ity to rate professors in different categories such as fairness of teaching, helpfulness and clarity.

In the case of professors, opinions are mixed considering the Web site’s usefulness or reliance.

“I have never looked at it,” said professor Polly Phillips, a member of the Biological Sciences Department at FIU. “But it seems like it is probably a place for students to vent more than anything.”

For some, Rate My Professors has a strong influence on students because it gives them preconceived ideas about the professors.

“I don’t think students should rate a professor solely by RateMyProfessors.com,” said Scott Kass, University librarian and Honors College professor. “It gives a very broad portrait of the professor. It’s like a cartoon of the professor.”

But not all students use this Web site as an indicator of a professor’s teaching style. Some, in fact, prefer not to use the Web site at all.

“I don’t use it at all since I think the comments there are mostly biased,” said junior Corina Moreno.

State, FIU scrutinize E-classes

Force is mandated to present the Legislature a report recommend- ing statewide guidelines for higher education online learning by March 2009.

The Task Force will ensure that online courses comply with accreditation standards but questions about the quality of online education compared to traditional instruction has propelled FIU’s Faculty Senate to set up its own Online Learning Committee.

“With gas prices alone, even if that wasn’t an issue, we would still expect distance learning to continue to grow, Edmonds said. “It’s really the convenience of it for some students.”

Because of this interest, the BOG is exploring online cost issues and inter-university sharing of technology but class quality issues need to be dealt with by individual universities, Edmonds said. Edmonds added, “We are not unaware about that kind of complaint but I’m not even sure whether [quality fears are] valid or not.”

Nevertheless, Elam expects online enrollment to continue to grow.

Because the FIU community is heavily based on non-traditional students who must balance multiple responsibilities, online options will be in demand, Elam said.

The reduced fee will force FIU to pay its faculty with its $4 million instructional budget.

Yet, even with the current budget crisis, the University is steadfast in offering online classes if the demand is there, Wartzik said.
Science club makes subject fun, helps community

CHRISTOPHER ADAMS
Contributing Writer

Most students do not see science as a social subject, but when the tally came in for the Student Organizations Council to decide the 2007-2008 club of the year, the Biscayne Bay science club, along with the international students club, were one of the two in a draw for Club of the Year. "They really had earned top of their points and they had come highly recommended," said Didier Georges, president of SOC. "They had attended all the fairs, had great advisors, got the crowd involved and really stood out among the rest."

In order for a club to win FIU’s Club of the Year title, the club needs to earn points for attending events on campus, be reviewed on its involvement within the community, be recommended on behalf of the club itself, and of course win the vote of the SOC board in the end. "We actually do a lot as a club: reaching out to the community, tutoring, competitions and not to mention the fun experiments we show at festivals," said Amerca Junaman, president of the science club and a biology major. On their off time, the science club members spend a lot of time visiting local public schools. "We love to go out and teach the neighboring underprivileged schools about the sciences and getting them interested," Juman said. "Some of us came from these underfunded schools, and we wish someone would come to show us cool experiments then." But it is not all about the fun and games. "We also help tutor the kids so that they get better scores on their FCATs," said Lorilice Valenties, vice president of the science club. "The Biscayne Bay Campus does not facilitate the higher level sciences, so we even help out FIU students who need a little tutoring with the higher level courses." Valenties is currently a senior majoring in chemistry. Besides community service, the science club competes yearly in the American Chemical Society, a nationally based competition among science clubs within colleges and universities for "top three" cash prizes. This year, competing schools must start an "Adopt-A-Stream" campaign where they get the community involved in cleaning up a lake, stream or other body of water.

"Last year, the University Park campus got third place and we got second, which is weird because all the upper level science courses and the departments are located down south," Juman said. The club is not just limited to science majors; it welcomes non-science majors as well. "Anyone can come and join, really. Non-majors are more than welcome to join. As a matter of fact, our club president last year was an engineering major, and our treasurer this year is an engineering major also," Juman said. According to Valenties, the club hopes to reach out to more kids in the surrounding community and to recruit more students. "A lot of our past members graduated, so we have lost a few," Valenties said. "We are really pushing to recruit new members."

"We really are shooting to get first place in the American Chemical Society this year. We also would like to have more events for the minority kids, and give them more exposure," Juman said.

The club members meet once a month for a general discussion, but they keep in contact frequently through e-mails and phone calls because many students do not have the time to meet every week.

"When I joined, I was just looking for a club, and I happened to come across the science club," Juman said. "They were really nice and supportive; they are like a small family."

For information on upcoming events and meetings, visit the science club’s MySpace page at www.myspace.com/bbcsc.

TICKLING IVORIES: Hubert Phanord plays the piano in the Wolfe University Center student lounge area.

Finding a direction with music

KISHORE SAWH
Contributing Writer

Self described on his business card as a "revolutoy, poet, actor, screen writer and pianist," business student Hubert Phanord’s life thus far reads like that of a comic book hero. "I used to talk with a thick slang, have a grill, long hair and was always in trouble," said Phanord. "I started noticing my experiences with women and then friends and family dying and I just knew there must be something more than this." Phanord now focuses on the future and has grand plans. He is currently putting himself through business school by working as a custodian at BBC.

A fellowship in his church motivated Phanord to go forth and “do good in this world.”

"I went from mission to mission through huge events which led to good people;” he said. After finding a direction through beliefs, music helped him focus. Phanord said he found peace in sponta-

word lyricism and piano. "In my poetry, I don’t waste words. I have hope. [You] gotta reach out to people for hope. There are people out there struggling who can be helped," he said.

"One of the ways Phanord furthers his passion is by playing the piano. "I love jazz," Phanord said. "I have only been playing for a year now and I can’t read music well, but I learned all the jazz chords."

But where Phanord’s passion for jazz comes from is a mystery. "Growing up," he said, "my mom wouldn’t let us listen to hip-hop or rap because she didn’t want us to have anything to do with that lifestyle."

A lifestyle that Phanord claims to have had for the better part of his life. His early childhood was marked by the death of his father and other matters that he does not discuss.

Phanord began playing piano when he was at a friend’s house and found the notes and keys on the piano. A few months later, his friend gave him a small, old keyboard. That keyboard turned things around for him. He prac-

ticed for five hours a day for the first five months. "I was able to practice at home, and I pulled a lot of information about playing from the internet that helped me to verbalize the chords I already knew," Phanord said.

"To stumble upon Phanord playing piano in the midst of a frantic Biscayne Bay Campus class day is like hacking your way through a bustling jungle, then arriving at Blue Lagoon. He is amazing," said Ryan Jagessar, a fellow student.

Juman said. "They were really interested in the science club," Juman said. "They came across the science club, and their points and they had come along with the international students club, which will really pushing to recruit new members."

"We really are shoot-

ting to get first place in the American Chemical Society this year. We also would like to have more events for the minority kids, and give them more exposure," Juman said.

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Students cooled down with free foam, food

JULIA CARDENUTO
Asst. News Director

With finals right around the corner and temperatures rising, the Biscayne Bay Campus is offering students an opportunity to cool down and get wet. On July 25, students will gather by the Bay Vista dormitories to enjoy free food, music and a foam machine. Water guns and bathing suits are only the beginning at the BBC Foam Party. "It is an event for students to come and enjoy themselves by meeting each other, hangout and have fun," said Ryan Lyttle, a fellow SPC student.

"It is a regular party with FRI students," said Ryan Lyttle, president of Student Programming Council. DJ Skip will be performing during the outdoor event, next to the volleyball courts. Bay Vista Housing will provide the facility and barbeque will be served to all guests.

"Basically, it is a fun night in the dorms for stu-
dents to chill and have fun before finals," said Didier Georges, president of SOC.

Lyttle said that 100 to 150 students are expected to attend the event.

The party is being advertised with posters around both campuses and on Facebook.

The yearly event is held every summer and sponsored by SPC, SOC, Panther Power and the Black Student Union.

All students are welcome to attend the party, which will take place from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. Everybody will be required to sign a waiver for safety and legal reasons.

A limited amount of water guns will be provided to students but they are also encouraged to bring their own.

"Don’t come to be pretty, come to get wet because that will make the event so much better," Lyttle said.

For more information, contact SPC-BBC at 305-919-5280.

Don’t come to be pretty, come to get wet because that will make the event so much better.
Student participation necessary for text message alert system success

In an era when campus security demands projection, the University should be lauded for its recently implemented emergency text message system. This system would send a mass text message to all students, faculty and friends of the University when urgent announcements such as cancellations, severe weather alerts and when an emergency situation is present. There are several things about this program that are positive.

First and foremost, it is free to students. Miami-Dade County offers the system to municipalities and educational institutions without charge.

With campus tragedies so few and far between, the ability for institutions to communicate without charge, such a useful system that would not only benefit a school but also garner positive publicity for the institution, the text message system could easily have been exploited for a large profit.

Locally, Miami-Dade has safety in mind and deserves recognition for facilitating the proliferation of this technology.

From an operational standpoint, the emergency text messages stand to be the most useful and effective form of mass communication to the University community.

Prior to the launch of the text message registrations, University officials could send out e-mails to every student and faculty member.

A simple example of an emergency e-mail that appeared in inboxes last school year is when a fatal shooting occurred at the Shell station across the street from University Park.

Almost everyone has a cell phone on them at any given time, making this the quickest way to reach everyone who needs certain information.

A public announcement system, such as a loudspeaker, only reaches those within ear-shot of the speaker, and many students and faculty may not be checking their e-mail at the time a serious threat is occurring, if they check their official FIU e-mail address at all.

The short amount of time that it takes for people to check a text message versus an e-mail is particularly important during an emergency situation, such as a security threat on campus that requires immediate action.

In an era when campus security demands projection, the University should be lauded for its recently implemented emergency text message system.

KISHORE SAWH Contributing Writer

Potential revenue from Hard Rock justifies Crist's compact

A fusspot is someone extremely worried, and there are many in the state legislature who think that they can decide how others live their lives by placing warning labels for everything that could go wrong, and restricting activities.

They tell us that we can’t drive over 55 mph, and shouldn’t drink more than a syringe worth of Chablis with dinner.

It is entirely clear where these people come from but their most recent target is gamblers.

Last November, Gov. Charlie Crist brokered a deal with the Seminole tribe leaders that would allow them to expand its gambling operation to include card games at its Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and casino-like blackjack and baccarat as well as some more Vegas-style slot machines not legal in the rest of the state.

This deal would greatly benefit our struggling state financially while giving Floridians greater freedom over how to spend their leisure time in a severely gambling-restricted state.

According to tribal spokesman Gary Bitner, the public has shown interest in playing these games.

“We had 40,000 people play the table games the first week. That shows demand,” Bitner was quoted as saying in an article by Sun-Sentinel writer Nick Sortal. To give an idea of how much money the state would receive, The Palm Beach Post offered some round ones. Under the terms of Crist’s compact, Florida would receive $175 million in the first year, $100 million for each subsequent year from the Seminoles. Not to mention the initial $50 million which was given on the spot.

Now that you have considered the things that can be done with this money and how many Floridians are interested in gambling, it should be a serious blow to find out that Florida House Speaker Mario Rubio questioned Crist’s authority to make such a deal shortly after it was brokered and was struck down July 3 by the state Supreme Court.

There is a 15 day grace period where the table games can continue and during which an appeal to the decision can be filed but there stands a chance that the state might have to return the $50 million that it already received from the tribe due to the invalidation of the compact.

This hurts, especially for students, since the state education budget, which was already cut more than $300 million this year, is a major loser in the compact. Yet, the Hard Rock and all the games it offers are still open for business, while the legal status of the card games is in limbo.

The Seminoles have to be allowed to offer slots regardless of Florida’s approval due to federal law that entitles them to the same gambling systems allowed anywhere in the state.

Because some facilities, such as race tracks, have slots, the federal Department of the Interior would allow the Seminoles to have slot machines, regardless. The important distinction to make here is that the state would not make any money from the casino if mandated by the federal government.

It Crist’s original compact does not make any money from the casino because it might create more gambling addicts is like worrying about the very new bar that pops up with a new brewery that will create more alcoholics.

This idea making people feel they have no control over themselves as a disease-model that makes everything in an accident or an affidavit. Then this tells them there isn’t much they can do to take charge. This works much like satellite navigation in cars.

When you rely on it you stop realizing the streets are going in the wrong direction. You stop using your intuition and innate sense which a way is right which is really about as useful as putting a snooze button on a house alarm.

And the fact remains that most people will hit the card tables only for a spot of fun with no addiction on the horizon. So, Rubio and all your cohorts, leaving the games is a win-win, which brings fun and lots of money.

Let the regular people who do regular things alone. Stop worrying about us who gamble for fun and worry about those who gamble to live up and some of the money to be made from this deal on addiction education and resources.
Honor society seeks growth at FIU

KASSANDRA POOL  Staff Writer

With a not-so-average size and heavy key in the right hand, a person is tapped on the right shoulder while facing the person tapping them.

This isn’t the initiation to some kind of cult, but that of a national leadership honor society.

ODK, Senior Cleo Monique Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

Publicly known as “The Circle,” FIU established the ODK honor society on April 21, 1985. According to president of ODK, Senior Cleo Monique, tapping can take place anywhere, but only occurs twice a year.

“Personally, I think it’s the suspense of being tapped into the circle that makes the process much more exciting,” said Fernandez.

The purpose of the honor society is to recognize individuals who have attained a high standard of leadership in college activities and to encourage them to aspire to higher achievements.

This year the group intends to increase awareness of ODK among students and faculty. By doing so, Fernandez feels that students will realize and feel the prestige that comes with being a member of the ODK circle as well as have faculty assist with nominations for potential members.

Ranking in as
Potential members are tapped to join ODK

ODK, page 5

Jenise Fernandez, as well as at least 60 credits and showing leadership roles in at least one of the five areas: scholarship, athletics, campus or community service, social and religious activities, and campus government; journalism, speech, and the mass media; and creative and performing arts.

Currently the circle at FIU has approximately 30 active members. The group hopes to expand on campus and stay active for the years to come.

“We feel that people don’t know who we are and how prestigious it is to be a member – we want members who will contribute to the group and recognize the leaders on campus.” Jenise said.

Jenise feels that this year has started surprising, “We have a couple of ideas for events to do with students and faculty, but that is a surprise,” Fernandez said.

Students interested in joining or getting more information should expect for the standards to be raised and commitment to be implanted.

Applications are out during the Fall and Spring semesters, depending on which semester they applied in.

When all the selective students have been tapped, they get inducted in either the Fall or Spring semesters, depending on the semester they applied in.

The group hopes to expand on campus and stay active for the years to come. The number three most prestigious honor society can drop and not become a part of the circle.

Students interested in joining or getting more information should expect to see the ODK Circle more on campus.

“We have a couple of ideas for events to do with students and faculty, but that is a surprise,” Fernandez said.

Pop/rock band diverges from its Beatles roots

The songs that really hint at what this band might someday be capable of are the songs that veer away from this sound and go for a darker, more ominous feel.

The Beatles, for crying out loud – but as my tastes have grown outward, I’ve found myself drawn less often to that type of sound.

So while Dr. Dog may have been in danger of losing my interest before long, their new direction – while ultimately, still firmly rooted in the influence of the past – has given me more appreciation of their work, both new and old.

Chris Towers can be reached at Chris.Towers@fiusm.com.
Volleyball adds new assistant coach

REPLAY, page 8

Sad the Sun Belt Conference with 74 home runs. That was a huge leap from the previous season when the team hit a total of 32.

She will not add much power to the lineup, as she hit four home runs last season, but she will provide a contact hitter.

The new recruits will try to help the Golden Panthers improve on last season’s fourth place finish.

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball head coach Danijela Tomic announced the appointment of the team’s new assistant coach, Eve Rackham on July 16.

Rackham is a student-athlete at North Carolina University where she was an assistant coach for the last three years.

“She brings with her a very impressive resume in the sport, both as a student-athlete at North Carolina and as a coach,” Tomic said.

At ECU, she was the program’s recruiting coordinator and helped identify and develop first three first team All-Conference USA selections, a pair of second team all-league picks and a third-team C-USA honoree.

Rackham worked specifically with two-time All-conference USA selection Heidi Kung.

She was responsible for developing the young star for the East Carolina University Pirates.

She comes to a Golden Panthers squad coming off two consecutive trips to the Sun Belt Conference Championship.

As a player, Rackham played for the University of North Carolina Tar Heels program. She was part of a team that won three ACC Tournament championships and had four straight NCAA appearances. As the starting setter at UNC from 1999-2002, the Tar Heels posted a 115-22 record.

Eve Rackham

GOLF

Golden Panther Monica Arrueza was named to the National Golf Coaches Association All-American Scholar Team on July 14.

The minimum cumulative GPA to qualify is a 3.5. The criteria for the selection to the NGCA’s All-Scholar Team are considered some of the most stringent in college athletics.

Arrueza is a three-time tournament winner for the Golden Panthers. Despite a knee injury last season, she averaged a 80.56 per round.

Her head coach Joe Vogel understands the difficulty of Arreza’s accomplishment.

“Despite playing hurt all year long, she competed in every match for us,” Vogel said. “She truly epitomizes what it means to be a student-athlete.”

Brito striving to lead women’s tennis to championship, improve on last season

Brito, page 8

“That was when I decided to bring my game to FIU,” Brito said.

Brito joined a Golden Panthers women’s tennis team that has an all-time winning percentage of over .575 over thirty seasons. The pressure of college classes and the NCAA tennis ranks made Brito’s freshman year at FIU difficult.

“Freshman year was very hard for me. It was tough balancing the academics and tennis, and sometimes I couldn’t tell which was harder,” Brito said. “I ended up changing my major from interior design to sports management. I guess it makes perfect sense.”

Taken under the wing of head coach Carlos Casely, Brito is quick to acknowledge the fact that staying in shape is a top priority to her coach.

“We have practices every morning during the season.

He stresses conditioning and being in good physical shape. During the fall I put in a good four to five hours a day, and that’s still not enough,” she said.

And this past season, as a Golden Panther, Brito defeated the school that once tried to recruit her, Baylor University.

In the season opener, she defeated Miami’s then No. 29 ranked Laura Vallverdu in three sets, and in the home opener won against the University of Central Florida, by a score of 6-1.

The women’s tennis team was ranked as high as No. 31 in the nation in 2008.

Brito’s championship background, combined with NCAA tournament experience, gives her hope for redeeming last season’s abrupt end.

“I really want to make it to the NCAA tournament, that’s my dream,” Brito said. “FIU qualifies for regionals, and after winning in the first two rounds, you get in. Why not us? I’ve only gotten better and faster since last year.”

SHUTTING OUT: Recruit Jennifer Ciudak will bring her high school championship to FIU.

Ximenes brings ‘A’ game to FIU

Ximenes, page 8

chooses not to talk about his childhood in detail.

“There were a lot of killings... like shootings,” Ximenes said.

He said he was fortunate enough to have a strong support system with his parents, who attended every soccer game he played in, no matter the family’s circumstances.

Amid a crime and poverty stricken city, Ximenes’ quiet personality could not change.

Coach Eketebi can attest to that.

“He mentioned that he was from Kingston and that there were some problems, but I didn’t know about it right away,” Eketebi said. “Let’s just say this: I knew that he wasn’t born with the golden spoon in his mouth.”

Before graduating high school, Ximenes was a member of the Under-17 Jamaican National Team, then after graduating from Excelsior High School in Kingston, he began his collegiate career playing for the San Jacinto Gators in Houston. It was unfamiliar territory for him, but he soon adapted with ease.

“Houston was great,” he said. “I got to know a lot of people and I learned a lot of Spanish.”

It was in Houston where he continued to impress and caught the eyes of Eketebi.

“I first saw him two years ago at a tournament being held at Richmond College which is in Dallas,” he said. “I saw him score goals, and he was just a freshman at the time.”

Eketebi saw him play again last year and after FIU’s offensive struggles last season (just 15 goals in 18 games), decided that finding a goal scorer was definitely a top priority.

“He [Eketebi] told me that FIU was a pretty good school and that the soccer was alright. He also said that there are enough challenges ahead so you have to be on top of your game.”

So two years since arriving to the United States, the latest phase of Ximenes’ soccer career brings him to Miami in August. The move makes it easier for him to visit his hometown.

When asked if he foresees Ximenes having difficulty adjusting to a different location and atmosphere, Eketebi responded, “There’s no reason why he should. There have always been Caribbean students here at FIU; he’s not the first and he won’t be the last.”

After receiving Junior College All-American honors last year, Ximenes will try and exceed those numbers for the Golden Panthers in the upcoming season.

Both Ximenes and Eketebi will also hope that the team can reach the conference championship again, except this time around hoisting the winner’s trophy.

Eketebi knows that his new offensive weapon will catapult the Golden Panthers from painful runner-ups to champions.

VISUAL ARTS

VIRGINIA LEGENDS/COURTESY PHOTO

XIMENES, page 8

Ximenes

FIU's offensive struggles last season (just 15 goals in 18 games), decided that finding a goal scorer was definitely a top priority.

He said he was fortunate enough to have a strong support system with his parents, who attended every soccer game he played in, no matter the family’s circumstances.

Amid a crime and poverty stricken city, Ximenes’ quiet personality could not change.

Coach Eketebi can attest to that.

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 clipping: www.fi usm.com
INTERNATIONAL STAR
Brito leads by example, elevates her game

ANDREW SOLOMON
Contributing Writer

Standing on the tennis courts of Oklahoma City, Brito saw her first flashes of FIU tennis come to an end.

Her loss at the 2008 NCAA Women's Tennis Championship during her junior year, partnered senior Kiki Petrigal, was the first time of championship defeat for Brito.

Once Brito lost a U.S. Open Juniors tournament in Brazil, which made her eligible for a world sponsorship to play internationally, a path was opened for her to gain a taste of international competition.

Born in Cuba, a father who was captain of his own tennis team, Liset came to the United States at the age of nine to pursue her dream of playing tennis professionally.

During her downtime between moving from Cuba to America, Brito began her career in tennis.

She played well enough to earn a sponsorship to play internationally, which made her eligible for a world ranking.

Constant exposure to the demanding physical aspects of the game—the stamina, the sweat, coupled with the support of her family—inspired Brito.

“My dad would always play, and I would always be with him,” Brito said.

“I come from a tennis family really, because my mother was out there playing too.”

Brito has played against some of the most competitive talent in Florida, the United States and the entire world.

After being ranked No. 2 in Miami, according to The Miami Herald, she competed in the U.S. Open Juniors tournament, where she lost an American opponent in straight sets.

“Obviously losing isn’t fun, but every loss is another lesson that’s just going to help me be better next time around,” Brito said.

Following her defeat in the U.S. Open Juniors tournament, she won double tournaments in Brazil, Paraguay and Ecuador.

Her final international tournament was in France, where she reached the quarter finals as a 13-year-old.

“Being able to travel the world is great by itself, but doing it to play tennis is what made it amazing for me, and winning at that young age topped it all off,” Brito said.

Brito’s parents decided to home school her after returning from France.

Home schooling enabled Brito to focus on analytics and develop her tennis game.

When her parents decided home schooling was unnecessary, Brito attended Miami Senior High School and captured the regional tournament championship during her senior year.

Once Brito graduated from high school, it was time for her to make a serious decision about her future. She started looking at the universities that would best enable her to showcase her talent in the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

BRITO, page 7

Transfer midfielder poised to spark men’s soccer offense

LUCA MESSINA
Staff Writer

While his team’s vocal leaders are screaming and directing players on the field, he is silent and prefers to let his skills do all the talking.

When ordered to help his team as a freshman, he scored 11 goals at San Jacinto Community College.

New Golden Panthers men’s soccer recruit, junior Ricardo Ximenes, brings his silent demeanor and offensive prowess to the 2008 squad. This past offseason, head coach Munga Eketebi recruited a player with an introverted leadership voice.

“He’s pretty much low key and will lead by example, but we’re bringing him in to make some noise,” said Eketebi, who in his second season, will try and help the Golden Panthers make another miracle run at the Conference USA Championship.

He’s powerful. He’s got a tremendous shot. He has great technical ability and his job is to put the ball in the back of the net.

Munga Eketebi men’s soccer head coach

They led powerhouse and No. 9 seeded Tulsa 2-1 with just 10 minutes left, but a depleted defense couldn’t sustain the lead as FIU eventually lost 3-2.

With Ximenes on the field for FIU, the team has the scoring option it needed much of last season, as it scored only 15 goals in 18 regular season games in 2007.

“He’s powerful. He’s got a tremendous shot. He has great technical ability and his job is to put the ball in the back of the net,” Eketebi said.

Growing up in the hostile streets of Kingston, Jamaica, Ximenes has experienced his share of violence. Jamaica has one of the highest murder rates in the world and 3/1 of murders occur within Kingston, according to the Department of Correctional Services, Jamaica.

Despite the numerous murders committed where he grew up and learned to love soccer at age five, he

Blanders/Sports

SPORTS REPLAY
New softball recruits show promise, want to improve lineup

Sergio Bonilla
Sports Editor

Two of FIU’s new softball recruits received All-State honors in Virginia and Florida respectively.

Pitcher Jennifer Gniadek and third baseman Kelsey Grabiak will be suiting up for head coach Beth McClendon this upcoming 2008 season.

Gniadek was voted the Virginia AAA Pitcher of the Year. She joins the FIU pitching staff that compiled a 5.93 ERA, but struckout 248 batters in 423 2/3 innings.

She was paired up with start-

Kasey Barrett, who compiled a 16-18 record in 263 innings.

Third baseman Grabiak was named to the Florida State Class 5A First Team and was District Player of the Year playing for Lakewood Ranch High School.

In her senior year, she batted .496 with four home runs.

Last season, the Golden Panthers power oriented offense

XIMENES, page 7

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