Students get the chance to preview new art museum

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

On Dec. 3, the new Frost Art Museum held a special event exclusively for University students. Sponsored by Target, museum visitors were greeted to the sounds of a live DJ and a tent filled with free food such as pasta, hot dogs and hamburgers. Inside the museum, students were greeted with tables, among them towels, pens and frisbees. Abby Araya, a freshman and a Student Government Association intern, was not able to see the entire museum, but commented on the museum’s organization.

“The museum looks professional, it looks like a real museum,” said Araya. “I liked that they had variations in the type of art.”

Araya hopes to return in the near future for other events and have the opportunity to look at the wide walls that displayed the art.

However, some students felt that some aspects of the event were out of place in a cultural setting.

“The music was a little too much, it tried too hard to attract young people,” said Oscar Lombana-Sanchez, a political science major.

Wendy Ordomez, an art education major and docent, explained the museum would be notifying students who want to attend future events.

“We’ll be sending regular updates through the University email to those who signed up at the event,” Ordomez said.

OPENING DAY

When the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum made its debut on Nov. 29, the University Avenue of the Arts was blessed with its crown jewel.

Students, staff, patrons, art connoisseurs and students trooped through the halls of the three-story architectural masterpiece to bask in the signature natural light that brings vibrancy to the art being displayed.

“The architecture is so avant-garde,” said Carlos Calviz, an architect from Colombia, as he pointed to the wide walls that displayed the art.

Susan Stoller, executive director of the Academy of St. Louis, stood gazing contemplatively at Robert Mothertwell’s “Wall Painting III” in the gallery exhibiting the Modern Masters collection from the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

“Every art piece while he waited patiently for the 2 p.m. group tour to start, guided by Gaby Portela, a junior majoring in art history.

Portela started the tour by guiding the group through the Andrew Reach exhibition, which drew immense interest from the guests.

The group then made its way through the second floor exhibiting the Modern Masters and permanent collections and through the third floor which displayed the emerging artists exhibitions of Luisa Casimiro, Florencio Galabert and John Henry.

A steady stream of people walked through the doors throughout the night, making it a successful debut.

“I never expected this many people to show up,” said Nicole Espaillot, a sophomore majoring in art history.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER: Senior Cindy Zamorano looks at Manuel Carbonell’s artwork Ritual and Rhythm at the Frost Art Museum’s Student BBQ on Dec. 3.

U.S. higher education not affordable, survey shows

JUSTIN POPE
AF Wire

An independent report on American higher education flunks all but one state when it comes to affordability — an embarrassing verdict that is unlikely to improve as the economy contracts.

The biennial study by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, which evaluates how well higher education is serving the public, handed out Fs for affordability to 49 states, up from 43 two years ago.

Only California received a passing grade in the category, a C, thanks to its relatively inexpensive community colleges.

The report card uses a range of measures to give states grades, from A to F, on the performance of their public and private colleges.

The affordability grade is based on how much of the average family’s income it costs to go to college.

Almost everywhere, that figure is up, according to the survey. Only two states — New York and Tennessee — haven’t made even minimal improvements since 2000, but they’re still considered to be failing.

Everywhere else, families must fork over a greater percentage of their income to pay for college.

In Illinois, the average cost attending a public four-year college has jumped from 19 percent of family’s income in 1999-2000 to 35 percent in 2007-2008, and in Pennsylvania, from 29 percent to 41 percent.

Low-income families have been hardest hit. Nationally, enrollment at a local public college costs families in the top fifth of income just 9 percent of their earnings, while families from the bottom fifth pay 55 percent — up from 39 percent in 1999-2000.

And that’s after accounting for financial aid, which is increasingly being used to lure high-achieving students who boost a school’s reputation, but who don’t need help to go to college.

The problem seems likely to worsen as the economy does, said Patrick Callan, the center’s president.

Historically during downturns, “states make disproportionate cuts in higher education and, in order to fund the colleges taking them gracefully, allow them to raise tuition,” Callan said.

“If we handle this recession like we’ve handled others, we will see that this gets worse.”

Scott Cristal of Columbia, Mo., said he wasn’t surprised by the study’s findings.

Cristal, who has sent two daughters to college and has another two yet to pay for, said that he is trying to expand his business to help pay tuition bills, but that it’s been hard because of the slowing economy.

“We’re going to play it by ear, be optimistic, hope for the best and just ride it out,” Cristal said.
College completion rates still low despite better preparedness

The result demonstrates a continuing change in the Cuban American community and reflects a generational rift between those Cubans who arrived in the U.S. in the 1960s and those who came to the U.S. after the Mariel Boatlift in 1980.

A new poll released by the University’s Institute for Public Opinion shows massive differences in opinions within the Cuban American community concerning the U.S. embargo against Cuba should end.

One result from the poll shows an important shift in opinions: 55 percent of Cuban Americans think the U.S. embargo against Cuba should end. The result demonstrates a continuing change in the Cuban American community and reflects a generational rift between those Cubans who arrived in the U.S. in the 1960s and those who came to the U.S. after the Mariel Boatlift in 1980.

As development coordinator for Washington State University, where Gregg was able to raise un- restricted annual gifts from $250,000 to $1 million annually.

University survey finds more Cuban Americans are against the U.S. embargo

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New environmental coordinator on board

PAMELA DUQUE
Asst. News Director

The Biscayne Bay Campus wants to protect its mangrove and coastal areas, and a new environmental coordinator has been hired to get the word out. "As much as there is a potential, it’s not going to happen without continuous engagement of students," said Rebecca Dinar, outreach coordinator in the Office of the Vice Provost. "Our campus is the only campus in the country next to a mangrove, and we want to couple the energy and enthusiasm of students with our geography to make BBC one of the top environmentally-friendly campuses in the country," Dinar said.

In May of this year, the Trust awarded a $140,000, two-year grant to the University, which pays for Craumer and Grimm’s salaries. Jane’s Trust was created in 2002, and it awards grants to programs that help “under-vantaged communities,” according to Gina Sisters of Miami, 2008. "Besides, they pay for it in their tuition." In addition to breakfast, there will also be music, games, meditation sessions and Zumba classes, which are part of a dance aerobic program. Giveaways, such as mugs with the name of the event engraved on them, and exam materials, such as blue books, will be provided to the first 150 people who attend the event. "They will have lots of fun, playing games and hanging out," said Mintz. "Besides, they pay for it in their tuition." For more information about the Midnight Breakfast contact Campus Life at (305) 919-5804 or go to their office at the Wolfe University Center, room 141.

DOUGLAS FORTE
Contributing Writer

At the end of the semester, many students, like junior international relations major Kerry-Ann Carby, will be in the library studying for exams. In an effort to provide a hot meal for students like Carby, who are studying late on campus, BBC Campus Life, Campus Recreation and Student Government Association will be providing a complimentary breakfast during their end of the semester event, the Midnight Breakfast. "You eat your food, you’re happy for an hour and then go back to studying," said Carby, who attended the event during the spring semester. "I am going again this year.

The Midnight Breakfast will take place Dec. 8 in Panther Square from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. "Students can come over, take a little break from their studying and have some scrumptious breakfast," said Joanne Oates, graduate assistant at Campus Life and Orientation. "It’s a great opportunity to recollect their thoughts and relax."

At the event, students are treated to an assortment of breakfast foods and drinks. All refreshments at the event will be provided by Aramark, the University’s food service provider. "There’s so many different kinds of foods eggs, bacon, sausage, waffles, toast, juice, bagels and the list goes on," said junior Joe L. Mintz, a mathematics major, who attended the event during the spring term. "There’s something for everyone."

In addition to breakfast, there will also be music, games, meditation sessions and Zumba classes, which are part of a dance aerobic program. Giveaways, such as mugs with the name of the event engraved on them, and exam materials, such as blue books, will be provided to the first 150 people who attend the event. "They will have lots of fun, playing games and hanging out," said Mintz. "Besides, they pay for it in their tuition."

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST

New environmental coordinator on board

Jennifer Grimm, a former City of Miami employee, is the new BBC environmental coordinator. She was hired to work along the Coastal Environmental Initiative, an environmental plan established in January 2007, to enhance the coastal environment. "We are privileged to be at this beautiful location. Students at BBC are environmentally engaged, and we want to couple the energy and enthusiasm of students with our geography to make BBC one of the top environmentally-friendly campuses in the country," Dinar said.

In addition to breakfast, there will also be music, games, meditation sessions and Zumba classes, which are part of a dance aerobic program. Giveaways, such as mugs with the name of the event engraved on them, and exam materials, such as blue books, will be provided to the first 150 people who attend the event. "They will have lots of fun, playing games and hanging out," said Mintz. "Besides, they pay for it in their tuition."

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DYING FOR DEALS

Buyers forget morals while they splurge

MAT RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

Last week on Black Friday, a 34-year-old named Jdimytai Damour was trampled to death by 2,000 rampaging shoppers in a New York State Walmart. Damour, an employee, was responsible for opening store doors at 6 a.m. and was overcome by the resulting stampede. Damour, along with a pregnant woman and three others, was rushed to the hospital where he was later pronounced dead, killed by the mob.

I’m sure I’m not alone in the horror I felt upon hearing about this story. A man killed for presents, things — stuff.

No longer alive because of a $9 Photo Collage-It Mug, forced-open store by 2,000 rampaging shoppers in a 34-year-old named Jdimytai Damour, killed one man at an Express store in a suburban Miami mall last Saturday and armed robbers of a pregnant woman was injured in a Wal-Mart parking lot.

As well, two men shot each other to save their homes from the resulting stampede. They were yelling, “I've been in line for hours!”

Alongside the violence, “I think they have to leave, that’s why I’m here,” one woman said.

One shopper, Kimberly Cribs, even recounted how others continued bargain-hunt- ing even after they were told of the homicide. “When they [officials] were saying they had to leave, that was one of the stories that were told of the homicide.

“Then they [officials] were saying they had to leave, that one employee got killed, people were yelling, ‘I’ve been in line since yesterday morning.’ They kept shopping,” she said.

At what point while stepping on a man’s throat for some discount microphone does a shopper stop and realize maybe, just maybe they’ve lost perspective?

Alongside the violence, Damour’s death sheds an all too deep, sorrowful as old Julius Caesar’s. It is an all too dark light on what Christmas has become.

The sense of community and family have been replaced by Black Friday and Cyber Monday, and the holidays that were once spent with the recipients are now cashed in at “pick a store.”

People are now referred to as “consumers” instead of, say, people or citizens. So does it come as any surprise that when discounts are at that deep, and human interaction is what shallow, how cheapened has the Christmas season become?

It’s almost Shakespearean in its tragedy. Damour’s death is as sorrowful as old Julius Caesar’s, stabbed by a dozen knives and who ended up having no one to blame but everyone around him.

Et tu, America?

The Beacon is always shopping for what you think! Share your thoughts on fi.usm.com/opinion or send them to opinion@fi.usm.com.

10th graders closer to college than ever

JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ
Staff Writer

High school is on the express lane.

Students are ready to go to college after tenth grade. According to a recent TIME magazine article published on Nov. 6, New Hampshire education officials would administer a test, and those that passed would be able to graduate from high school after their sophomore year.

The benefits of graduating students at an earlier age seem to be a win-win for everyone; it would save taxpayers money, lower dropout rates and prepare students at an accelerated pace. Cutting out the last two years of high school for qualified students would save money.

Instead of wasting money on students that are reading and solving math problems at a college level, educators could use these resources to help those that are having difficulties.

It wouldn’t be such a bad idea to start preparing college-bound students in middle school. By doing things this way, they would receive the same classes that they would in high school, just one year behind.

These programs already exist, but to a limited extent.

While algebra and geometry are offered, language arts, history and science seem to have been forgotten. Language arts could focus on philosophy and interpretations of famous novels. Also, geography could be more emphasized in the curriculum.

Students are legally required to remain in school until they are 16. If they were offered the option of going to college earlier, they might reconsider dropping out once, after all, they would only spend two years in high school.

College would offer the option of leaving their parents’ house but for a good reason: teens would learn the responsibilities of adulthood and learn to value money and the importance of a career. When living alone, students would have to work to pay the bills.

Critics might argue that in tenth grade students aren’t ready to move on to college and hang out with a different crowd.

However, research from the University of Washington suggests otherwise. It says that teens enter college when they are 12 to 14 perform well on an academic and social level.

Concerned parents believe it’s not worth the risk to take children to college at an advanced age.

“I don’t see any point in doing that, everything is appropriate at its time. I believe that she wouldn’t be mature enough,” Rapado said.

However, some parents don’t seem to mind their children going to college two years ahead, like Belkis Yera, who has a child on 7th grade.

“I was, because he is prepared, then I would be in favor of it. The test would be hard and measure the aptitude of my son to go to college,” Yera said.

The United States keeps falling behind in education compared to other industrialized countries.

According to The 2006 National Report Card on Higher Education, Florida was among the worst states to graduate ninth graders in four years. It’s one of the most expensive in tuition costs for low and middle income students, accounting for Bright Futures and financial aid.

In addition to this, Florida makes low investment in need-based financial aid compared with other top-performing states.

With global warming on the rise, a roller coaster economy and the need to solve medical diseases, it’s time we stop creating robots and start getting them ready for a high-quality education. Graduating in tenth grade would prepare young professionals for the workforce and allow them to tackle these unresolved issues.

Visit fi.usm.com/opinion to read a column by the Director of Chabad FLU regarding the recent terror attacks in Mumbai, India.

Prices To Die For?

Bissell Compact Upright Vacuum $28
Men’s Wrangler Tough Jeans $8
Samsung 50” Plasma HDTV $798

Visit fi.usm.com/handout for more information on these local deals.
No end in sight for the queen of pop's enduring rule

LEONCIO ALVAREZ
Copy Chief

Last week Madonna gave a crowd of over 50,000 more reason to be thankful on Thanksgiving. Her Sticky and Sweet Tour made a stop at Dolphin Stadium and brought with it all the raunchiness, mind-blowing choreography and offensive hand gestures one would expect at a Madonna concert, minus the faux British accent.

The time on the ticket said 7:30 p.m. but that was an unlikelihood. Traffic seemed almost unreal to first; all of these people just to see one person. If there was any doubt about Madonna's relevance, it has been cleaned with this tour. This was just one date on a list of over 50 sold out stadiums she has done or will do.

Starting in Europe, Miami is one of her final U.S. shows and, in the coming month, Madonna will take her tour to South America. She has already beaten her own record for top selling female live act of all time, according to Billboard. com, and the tour isn’t even over yet. The wait seemed well worth it.

Madonna was all smiles as she took control of the stage, and she would not subdue for the next two hours. At about 10 p.m., the lights were shut off and the stage began to take shape. Three LCD screens showed a piece of hard candy travelling through an array of conveyor belts and pipes in what seemed to be a candy factory.

After the colorful journey, Madonna appeared - on a black throne, legs wide apart with her sex slaves, or dancers. “Candy Shop,” a track from her new album, blasted through the speakers while Madonna made it clear to anyone in doubt that her sugar is still raw.

The next track, “Beat Goes On,” saw a white 1935 Auburn Speedster plowing through the stage and a video back-drop of Kanye West in a stylish black tuxedo. It hadn’t even been ten minutes but Madonna made sure her audience was entertained every dance step of the way.

Madonna is known for revamping her older songs while showcasing her current material.

Her latest rendition of “Vogue” brought old and new together, mixing it up with the drums and brass of her chart topper, “4 Minutes.” The crowd went haywire as soon as the words “ladies with an attitude” came out of Madonna’s mouth. She followed with another oldie, “Human Nature” where B'Flay Spears also made a video cameo inside an elevator while whispering the famous lines “express yourself, don’t repress yourself.”

The next part of the show was inspired by the late artist Keith Haring. Haring was a friend of Madonna and his art took center stage during a mix of “Get into the Groove.” His colorful figurines filled the video screens while whispering out the lyrics to the song. Sporting 80’s inspired shorts and a hoodie, Madonna gyrated on a moving stripper pole atop DJ Enformer’s turntables.

Making sure to pay homage to her rock roots, Madonna strapped on a guitar several times throughout the night. One time was during her classic, “Borderline,” where she picked up a bright pink guitar and rocked out the simple chords that made her a house-hold name.

During another new track, “She’s Not Me,” Madonna and another unexpected guest Pharrell Williams gave it to Miami. They sang, “They say that a good thing never lasts and that it had to fall. Those are the people that did not amount to much at all.”

After 25 years on top of her game, Madonna keeps proving that nothing is going to stop her. At 50, yes, 50, she has no plans of slowing down. And why should she? She’s Madonna.
Love album combines rock, electronica, strong lyrics

The album "Signs of You" is their debut album that was released on Nov. 25. Most songs in "Signs of You" are about relationships but they are relationships gone awry. Instead of having music and lyrics that reflect anger and frustration, the album seems to focus on the inner-workings and thoughts of a sensitive guy trying to get over the girl who never appreciated him from the start.

As a result, we can safely call this a series of "I'm hurt" songs, with such songs as "If you leave me," "I have to break up with you," and "I'm hurt," songs with an awesome and captivating tag.

On their first single, "Tuesday," Vocalist Brendan Canning, the lead singer, sings, "If you choose to walk away, then I'm not gonna be here on Tuesday." He threatens the girl that he'll leave her, but the more he thought about it he began to appreciate him from the start. "Only a day away and every moment without her is like a minute frozen in time."

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The song seems to focus on the inner-workings and thoughts of a sensitive guy trying to get over the girl who never appreciated him from the start. As a result, we can safely call this a series of "I'm hurt" songs, with such songs as "If you leave me," "I have to break up with you," and "I'm hurt," songs with an awesome and captivating tag.
Golden Panthers exceeded expectations this year

How do you grade out a team that over performs exceptionally low expectations? The Golden Panthers football team will probably get up at 5-7, following this weekend’s match up against the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers (2-9) at FIU Stadium. A four-win improvement, and matching the program’s best win total has to be considered a success, but how much so? In assessing the season, it is fair to judge the team by last year’s team, or in a vacuum? If you judge them on expectations, then this season was a nothing success, given the one win predicted by most “experts.”

People who knew more about the team had higher expectations, though not many could have expected a late season run at the conference title. I myself was relatively optimistic and expected around four wins, so even by those expectations the season was a success.

However, given how high the expectations got in the last few weeks, when talk of bowl berths and championships was so far fetched, you can’t blame fans for being dis-appointed by the final outcome of the season.

OFFENSIVE SPARK

Probably the biggest surprise of the season was the improved play from the offense, led by T.Y. Hilton, who has outdistanced our pages and opposing defenses with his school record 969 and counting receiving yards to go with a second nationwide total offensive star with his stellar return play, not to mention his passing and rushing touchdowns.

Hilton’s emergence has helped junior quarterback Paul McCall solidify his place as the quarterback for now and next season, proving 2,040 yards and 14 TDS, with only nine interceptions, a significant improvement over last season’s play from Wayne Younger and McCall.

Alongside Hilton, Greg Ellington has emerged as a solid possession receiver, using his great size and hands to make acrobatic catches. He has especially turned it on over the last two games, grabbing 12 passes for 219 yards over that time. Junior Mertile has also shown flashes of potential playing the outside receiver position when.

Not all was positive for the offense, as the running game failed to find its footing all year, averaging just 94 yards per game. Departing seniors Julian Reams and A’Mod Ned ever had, and they closed their careers out with a paltry 761 yards combined between the two. Sophomore Daunte Owens and freshman Daniel Perry managed to make the most of their opportunities, averaging more yards per carry and showing more potential than Reams and Ned ever had.

The offensive line has been good at times, but their tendency to break down when faced with pressure situations might have cost the team two late comebacks against FAU and Louisiana-Monroe.

Offense grade: B+

STEADY DEFENSE

At times, this defense carried the FIU team on their backs, and at other times the entire unit looked like they were wearing their helmets backwards.

The highest point was the opening home game against then No. 12 USF, who scored just 17 points. The defense caused a turnover and forced a couple of field goals on goal line stands, keeping them in the game with a spirited performance to christen the new stadium.

The lower part of the last quarter of the FAU game showed how vulnerable this defense could be at times. FAU’s quarterback Rusty Smith tore the secondary up for 28 points in the fourth quarter.

The secondary was, however, the strength of the defense for much of the season, with safeties Jeremiah Weatherpoon and Marshall M-Cuffie patrolling the tops and cornersbacks Robert McIitchell and Anthony Gaitor shutting down opposing passing games in the flats.

Gaitor got his hands on the ball more than any other player, picking four balls off and getting another 10 tipped passes, while McIitchell led the team in tackles and was all over the field.

The guys down front struggled to keep the opposing teams’ running games in check most of the time, though they were pretty good at getting in the backfield and getting tackles for a loss. Quentin Newman quietly had a strong year at the defensive end position, picking up four sacks and 10 TFL, while Scotty Bryant, M-chad Dominguez, and Ryan Martinez were all around the leaders of the team in tackles.

Defensive grade: B

Defensive MVP: McIitchell and Gaitor

TEAM’S SPECIALTY

While much has been made of T.Y.’s abilities returning the ball, playing two touch-downs and averaging 15 yards per punt return and 25 yards per kickoff return, a quiet strong performance even without his contribution. Punter Carlos Munera lead the conference in net punt average and punts within the 20 yard line.

Special Teams grade: A- Special Teams MVP: Munera and Phillips

NEXT YEAR

For the first time ever, the future is bright for this team, with many returning contributors on all sides of the ball. The offense is led by mostly underclassmen, and should be one of the top in the conference next season.

On the other end D’Haill and Alfonso Phillips were able to block a couple of punts each, and Phillips picked up 14 tackles on special teams and a blocked punt return for a touchdown. Dustin Rivest improved his field goal and, but was still just 15-15 on field goals.

Special Teams grade: A- Special Teams MVP: Munera and Phillips

2008 team grade: B

BRIGHT FUTURE: Next year’s team looks promising with the Golden Panthers returning many contributors on offense like T.Y. Hilton (4).

The defense has depth, and many returns of many of the play-makers in the secondary and linebacking corps, though the defensive line will take some hits.

There is no reason why this team shouldn’t be able to win one of the top three teams in the Sun Belt next season, and looking at their schedule, with the exception of Florida and Alabama, every game on their schedule is winnable.

You have to grade this team high based on exceeding expectations at the beginning, but they are knocked down by failing to close out against ULM and FAU, which could’ve led them to a bowl game.

2008 team grade: B

2008 team MVP: Hilton
FINAL CURTAIN CALL

Golden Panthers look to rebound against Hilltoppers

ANDREW JULIAN
Sports Director

Coming off a 57-50 overtime loss to FAU, in the Shula Bowl, the Golden Panthers (4-7, 3-4 SBC) look to send their senior class out with a victory against Western Kentucky (2-9), in the final game of the season at FIU Stadium.

The FIU offense has been its best at the end of the season, putting forth its best offensive outputs in recent weeks. FIU has out gained five of its last eight opponents, and is 4-4 in those games, and picked up 533 yards against FAU. The Golden Panthers are averaging 352.8 yards per game in those games, and will look to continue their strong offensive output against a Hilltopper squad that ranks 71st in the FBS in total defense, at 369.8 yards per game.

For FIU, the offensive process begins with their offensive line, which has allowed just three sacks over the past two games, and has paved the way for back-to-back 100-yard rushers for the first time in four years. FIU’s offensive line is a healthy as it has been all year, and has developed a continuity that has allowed them to be playing well at the end of the year. The young offensive line features just one senior, Dustin Nieves, and in addition to peaking at the end of this season, should have a full cupboard as FIU looks toward the off season.

Paul McCall has been one of the beneficiaries of the steady offensive line play, throwing for a school record 400 yards against the Owls, and putting together a productive season, after being embroiled in a quarterback battle in training camp. McCall has completed 52 percent of his passes for 2,040 yards and 14 touchdowns, with just nine interceptions. McCall will attempt to become the starting first FIU quarterback to throw fewer than 10 interceptions in a season, and the junior form Hollywood Hills will have a good chance to post the first season bay a signal caller with more touchdowns thrown than interceptions in three seasons.

After posting 116 yards and two scores on the heels of a 127 yard one TD performance by Julian Reams, freshman running back Darriet Perry should be a factor once again this week. Perry, who was thrust into duty because of injuries, should have another opportunity to show what he can do, as he, and the senior Reams, will be the main tailbacks getting carries in the contest.

Greg Ellington and T.Y. Hilton have evolved into one of the best one-two receiver combinations in the Sun Belt. Hilton has collected 49 passes for 969 yards and seven touchdowns, while Ellington has added 29 receptions for 470 yards and three scores. Hilton has posted the greatest receiving season in FIU history, already having set the record for yards and touchdowns, and remains within striking distance of FIU’s first 1,000-yard season.

Defensively, FIU will have some holes to plug against WKU, having allowed 524 yards to FAU last week. The Golden Panthers should have an easier time, not facing a top-tier offensive attack, in Western Kentucky, that averages 295.7 yards per game, 110th in the FBS.

David Wolke will try to figure out the FIU defense for the Hilltoppers. He’s posted an even eight TD’s and eight picks this season, and had throwed for 1,140 yards. The Hilltoppers have allowed 22 sacks this season, playing nearly a full Sun Belt schedule, and that number is fewer than the 25 FIU has allowed.

On the ground, WKU likes to spread the carries around, with five rushers with 200 or more yards, and only one averages less than four yards per carry. A unique feature of the Hilltopper offense is that they average over 150 yards per game on the ground, despite their leading rusher, Tyrell Hadad, averaging just 33.9 yards per game. Jake Grabler is the leading receiver with 540 yards on 49 catches and four of the eight WKU touchdown catches.

Senior defensive back Robert Mitchell leads the Golden Panthers in tackles with 82, and is second in both tackles for loss (7.5) and sacks (3.0). He and Anthony Gaitor may contend for post-season all-conference honors. Gaitor leads the SBC in passes defended with 14 and has four interceptions.

If the FIU front seven can stop the WKU rushing attack, FIU should have good success. Against FAU, the Golden Panthers allowed 135 yards, and balance between multiple backs kept FIU’s front seven out of its comfort zone. Push in the middle will come form Jonas Murrell and Jonathan Nieves, and the linebackers have had solid years making tackles for loss when given space to work.

BEACON PREDICTION

The Golden Panthers, after back-to-back heartbreaking losses, will come out fired up for senior day, and the focus will be in tune from the first snap. FIU has had some blowouts this year, but none have been complete games where they marched right through an opponent; this week will be different. FIU’s lines, for the first time this season, will dominate the game, and give the 39 FIU seniors something to remember for their last home game. T.Y. Hilton will eclipse the 1,000 yard mark, and Paul McCall will post the best TD-to-INT. In the history of the young FIU football program, and the Golden Panthers will roll.

FIU 42, WKU 30