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Florida International University

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BUDGET CUTS ... AGAIN

State Legislature proposes further cuts to higher-ed

JULIA CARDENUTO
Paulo O’Swath
Beacon Staff

The Florida Legislature met on Monday in a special session to cut a total of $2.3 billion from the state’s budget. A two percent reduction for public schools and a four percent for higher education are being considered by the state Senate and House. This special session, set to last for two weeks, is the third time in the past 10 months that Florida lawmakers make major cuts to the state budget. These cuts are due to drops in tax revenues and the overall state of the national economy. The House and Senate will be splitting into committees in order to address the situation. Each committee will concentrate on a different issue, including health and human services, education and transportation, among others.

The bad news for Floridians doesn’t stop there. In March, when the regular legislative session takes place, further budget cuts are likely to occur.

With $6 billion less than one year ago, the state’s budget of $66.3 billion is likely to fall short by $3.5 to $4 billion next fiscal year. Gov. Charlie Crist’s proposal aims at both borrowing and saving money.

“Florida is among 12 states that has implemented or proposed cuts to public colleges and universities. “Florida has already cut university budgets and community college funding, with further cuts expected,” according to a report published by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In the last 10 months, Crist has already ordered $561.5 million in hold-back cuts to education. For FIU, this meant a six percent or $13.9 million cut to its budget in 2008. Last summer, the University

SCUBA classes provide stress free alternative

DIANA JORDAN
Staff Writer

With the beginning of the Spring semester, some students may find themselves still trying to find classes to enroll in. One option for these students: scuba diving classes, an alternative to rigorous coursework.

“Af ter hearing about these courses, I decided to enroll in PEN 2136 so I can have at least one class in my schedule I don’t need to stress over,” said sophomore Allison Alonzo, a biochemistry major.

The bad news for Floridians seems to have such a narrow focus. In this course, students will complete a rigorous coursework. In this lab, the information taught in the classroom will be reinforced and divers will acquire skills to ensure a safe diving environment.

Another diving course being offered this semester is PEN 2132: Scuba Diving Lab. In this lab, students interested in learning diving skills will have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of diving.

Students who enroll in PEN 2136: Basic Scuba Diving, a two-credit introductory scuba course, will learn the basics about diving physiology, underwater safety, survival and equipment. Students must also enroll for its one-credit corequisite course, PEN 2132: Scuba Diving Lab.

In this lab, the information taught in the course will be reinforced and divers will acquire and refine the skills needed to dive independently. All students enrolled in Basic, Advanced, Rescue and Leadership Scuba Diving courses must take this lab.

Another diving course being offered this semester is PEN 2137: Advanced Scuba Diving – a three-credit course designed for students with experience and advanced knowledge in diving. Those who have taken PEN 2136 and have already had basic scuba training may enroll in this course. Advanced dive safety, underwater navigation and search and rescue techniques will be the central focus. In this course, students will complete a total of 16 dives as opposed to the six completed in its pre-requisite course, PEN 2136.

“I highly recommend this class to everyone. Not only did I become a certified diver but also found a new way to relax on the weekends,” said Billy Gil, a senior and journalism major.
Students’ questions addressed

Q&A, page 1

try to focus on college and FIU-related news because we will probably provide the most in-depth coverage of these types of topics. The Miami Herald and other competitive media outlets may not give as much coverage to the events and topics that we focus on.

Q: When is it legally permissible or ethical to use a student’s name in an article?
Jarus: Legally, it’s almost always OK to use a student’s name as a photograph. If you are taking a picture anywhere on campus, as long as you are in a public setting, you don’t need their permission to take that photograph. But if somebody says, “This is off the record,” then [a reporter] has an ethical obligation to stand by that.

Q: If a student were arrested, would it be permissible to publish his/her name and the circumstance of his or her arrest?
Jarus: It depends on whether it’s in the police report. If it’s in the police report, it’s public record. [Public record] is protected by the Sunshine Laws and you can release any thing that’s in the police report. But keep in mind, we cover almost everything as public record. Sunshine Laws also require people or entities to publicly announce any entity that is dictating any type of policy [as obligated to allow anybody]

It is our responsibility to the FIU community to be the watchdog and to inform and entertain students...

Charlie Grau
former editor in chief, The Beacon

University recruits seasoned director

JULIA CARDENUTO
News Director

After a near three-month search, Barry Taylor was appointed director of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

The Search Committee, chaired by Francisco Valenzuela, director of Financial Aid, concluded the national search in late October, according to Vice President for Enrollment Management Corinne M. Webb.

Taylor comes with over 23 years of experience in marketing, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, retention and new student orientation. He has worked at Cornell University, Rider University and Tufts University. Before coming to FIU, he concluded his sixth year at Princeton University as the associate dean of the Office of Admissions.

Renée Peterson was acting as interim director, managing the Office of Undergraduate Admissions since July 2008, after Carmen Brown left her position as director. Brown went to New Mexico University and is working as the vice president of enrollment management.

Taylor officially started at the University on Jan. 5 and Peterson will serve as senior associate of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Q: Where does The Beacon make its money? Where does that money go?
Jarus: [The Sunshine Laws] sometimes butt heads with [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act], the Buckley Amendment, which protects confidentiality on certain student issues—registration, grades and things like that.

Q: What are the Sunshine Laws?
Jarus: The state of Florida has a law that says you can’t print rape victims’ names, but it’s been proven unconstitutional twice already. That is an ethical dilemma.

Whether you are in a public setting

Q: Why are there so many mistakes in the paper? How do you avoid them?
Soto: [Mistakes] happen because it’s a student publication. A lot of people forget that The Beacon is not run by professional journalists. These are people who, one day, hope to become professional journalists. They’re learning here. Mistakes are going to happen.

Q: Where does that money go?
Jarus: [The Sunshine Laws] sometimes butt heads with [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act], the Buckley Amendment, which protects confidentiality on certain student issues—registration, grades and things like that.

Q: What are the Sunshine Laws?
Jarus: The state of Florida has the most liberal Sunshine Laws, which means the Sunshine Laws

More cuts are on the way

BUDGET CUTS, page 1

cut a total of 25 academic programs due to these budget cuts.

“I had a class dropped last semester and it’s a required class for my major. Hopefully, I’ll still graduate on time,” said Michael Bramblett, a computer science major.

Tuition was also increased by at least six percent and nearly 200 workers were laid off.

“I’m paying $1,000 more this semester compared to last semester, and now I’m in debt $40,000 because of that,” said Veronica Torres, an international business major.

About half of Flori da’s revenue from general taxes are directed to education.

Part of Crist’s plan is to cut nearly $100 million from education spending; half from state universities and half from K- 12 centers, work force training and community college.

“I have fewer options today. You have to take the punches and move on I suppose,” said political science major Jesus Valen tino. “There are a lot less scholarship options because of lack of money. My options, variety and selections have dried up.”

POLICE NOTES

Dec. 17

A theft report was made by Mary Ayers after her FIU decal was stolen from her vehicle while parked on campus.

Dec. 31

FIU construction worker Ramirez Floresco was transported to Jackson Memorial Hospital after falling approximately 30 feet to the ground, after trying to take apart a scaffold. Floresco suffered from injuries to his left elbow, along with facial lacerations.
Travel programs let students take their reporting abroad

ADA M. ÁLVAREZ Contributing Writer

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication announced three new study abroad programs in Germany, Spain, Africa and Argentina for Summer 2009. Students can now earn up to six college credits while touring Europe, Africa or Argentina.

The programs – which are open to all public relations, advertising and journalism majors – all begin at FIU, where students receive multimedia training for a week.

Attendees undergo a crash course in Photoshop, Final Cut Pro, editing, writing skills and basic principles of public affairs, according to Fernando Figueredo, coordinator of the study abroad programs and SJMC professor.

“Germany and Spain were pilot projects last year and they were so successful, people from other universities wanted to learn more about them to see if they could come along too,” Figueredo said.

Classes in Berlin, Germany and Seville, Spain will be offered during Summer A and will focus on public relations and advertising.

The cost of the Berlin program is $3,700, excluding tuition.

The fee will cover estimated airfare, room accommodations for 22 nights, breakfast, medical insurance, a one-day visit to Madrid’s Prado museum and to different advertising and public relations agencies, one-day visits to historical Cordoba and Granada, and history and dance lessons at the Flamenco museum.

The program will work in conjunction with the University of Seville, which is the No. 1 ranked school of journalism and mass communications in Spain, and one of the top three in Europe.

“The programs in Africa and Argentina are pilot programs, but they sure will be very interesting,” said Mario Diamante, SJMC professor of drama and journalism.

The complete programming, scheduling of classes, tourism activities and cost of the new pilot programs in Capetown, South Africa, and Buenos Aires, Argentina have not been determined, according to Figueredo.

Allan Richards, SJMC interim associate dean of journalism, is coordinating the program in South Africa. Richards also took students to Africa last year to create an AIDS documentary.

Though specific dates have not yet been determined, classes in Germany and Spain are scheduled for the Summer A semester.

To enroll in any of the programs, students must place a $100 deposit, payable to the University, and a $175 check must also be made to the Office of International Studies to cover the cost of the medical insurance package.

Students also need to submit a non-refundable deposit of $1,800 to the University by Feb. 10.

The remaining fee must be paid 60 days prior to departure and reservations will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis.

“While earning [my bachelor’s degree], I didn’t travel so that I could graduate fast and didn’t do anything abroad. This time, I won’t miss out on this great opportunity and experience,” said Lorraine Caceres, who is a first-year journalism master’s degree candidate.

For more information, contact Figueredo at fernando.figueredo@fiu.edu.
Students lose touch with reality through Internet, electronic lives

IRIS A. FEBRES
Asst. Opinion Editor

Most of us are probably immersed in the world of the Internet. As a student at FIU, you’ve probably used the World Wide Web in order to do research for a paper or even complete a class. The Internet has also granted us the opportunity to stay connected with friends and family via e-mail and instant messaging services. And with social networking sites including MySpace and Facebook – which, combined, have over 250 million users – it’s easy to seamlessly enter the lives of your friends through sharing photos, more messages and even applications and games.

But I wonder if it is possible to be “too connected” to the Internet. I’m not talking about having an addiction; I mean having too many “e-nooks” scattered across the Web.

I myself have many online accounts that serve as facets of a possible online persona: an “e-me”; because of course I have a Facebook and MySpace, although I use the former much more often (read: every day); Facebook statuses), Flickr (a photo-sharing community) and MySpace, do we step back and relish the memory?

When we take photos of events and post on Facebook, do we step back and relish the memory? When we take photos of events and post online. And then there’s Facebook Mobile, where I can “poke” my friends with the push of a button, without a computer screen, the pokes and the tweets.

Every once in a while we should take a breath and remember that the Internet isn’t important; it has only force us to realize how unappealing.

So, I hope New York legislators rethink their positions on this tax proposal, because childhood obesity may be a problem – but anarchy can be one as well, and a trip to the gym can’t solve that.

The timing of this tax proposal is also typically suspicious. It’s been known for a long time that soda (or “pop,” if from the North) contributes to obesity. Why put this disincentive into effect now?

My theory is that only now is a tax such as this politically viable. Gov. Paterson was only recently made governor after the call-girl scandal that surrounded, and evicted, Eliot Spitzer. Paterson probably won’t survive the next election and sees this as a last ditch effort to add even more taxation to the most heavily taxed state in the U.S.

Maybe it takes a man brought into office by a prostitution scandal to really screw the citizenry. I just hope no more states follow suit.

New York’s proposed soft drink tax fights obesity, ignores bars

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

Last month, in an effort to balance New York’s hemorrhaging state budget, Gov. David Paterson proposed an “obesity tax” – which has also been considered by other states – on all non-diet soft drinks.

Two aims were in mind with the proposal: to curb the epidemic of childhood obesity and to rake in an estimated $404 million.

There is, however, a side effect from this tax that has been ignored. One quite nefarious result will hit millions of New Yorkers – and whoever else adopts this tax – right where it hurts: the bar scene.

The proposed tax hike will unfairly target those who dislike butt-flavored shots of Jager and instead prefer some semblance of taste with their alcohol. Gone will be the days of mixed drinks, of the Mexicola, the Beam Black Bulldog, the Banging On The Hardwood Floor and everybody’s old pal Rum and Coke. Instead, they will have to be diet (yuck!), or more expensive than ever before.

The liquor industry, and by extension, the very social fabric we live in, will be destroyed by such a tax. Instead of celebrating with a round of B-52’s for everybody, Bachelor/Bachelorette parties will have to do nothing, limited to plain ol’ boozing beer, or shots of tequila. Cheap soda is integral to how people interact.

So, I hope New York legislators rethink their positions on this tax proposal, because childhood obesity may be a problem – but anarchy can be one as well, and a trip to the gym can’t solve that.

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Maybe it takes a man brought into office by a prostitution scandal to really screw the citizenry. I just hope no more states follow suit.

Send your responses to opinion@fiu.com or post them on fiu.com/opinion.
It's about that time again. School is starting up for Spring and with it comes fraternity Rush Week.

For all you guys out there who have always wondered how you can get involved on campus, this is the perfect way.

By going Greek, you will be able to take part in many exciting experiences such as hosting philanthropic events for your fraternity, having fun at Dance Marathon and attending mixers with the sorority ladies.

No matter what organization you join, Greek life allows for developing great leadership skills and even if you possess those already, joining a fraternity creates many opportunities for individuals to stand out and you will definitely grow as a person.

Rush Week starts next Monday, Jan. 12. If you are even the slightest bit interested in what the fraternities have to offer, they will all have tables set up in Graham Center this week and next week to give information about their particular organization as well as Rush Week in general and the whole process.

"I think Rush Week gives everybody a good opportunity to see what each fraternity is about, and it helps you to get to know the brothers on a more personal level," said Jaime Montalvan, a junior and member of Pi, Kappa Phi.

You can sign up for Rush Week at any of the fraternity tables at no charge. Also, be aware that just because you sign up at one fraternity's table does not mean that you are tied to that fraternity in any way.

When you sign up for rush, you are signing up for meeting all the fraternities, not just that one table where you signed up.

The first night of the process is called “Meet the Fraternities,” which takes place Monday, Jan. 12.

On this night, you will meet every fraternity involved in Rush Week and each fraternity will give you a presentation about the organization’s core values, what they do on campus and whatever else they feel they have to offer you.

For the rest of the week, each fraternity will host a different event each night. These events provide a relaxed atmosphere where you meet the brothers of the fraternity as well as some of the sorority women on campus.

"I think this semester’s rush will be even more beneficial for the guys interested in Greek life than Fall rush was because many students have already seen what all the fraternities [did] on campus last semester, so they have a better understanding of what being in a fraternity is all about," said Alex Maliet, a sophomore and member of FIJI.

So, if what I’ve stated so far hasn’t fully sold you on the idea of going Greek, attend at least one event or stop at a table and see for yourself. During anytime of Rush Week, you are free to stop attending any of the events without any obligations.

You can also attend as many different fraternity events as you wish. So, keep your options open and have an open mind.

I’m sure you will find an organization that appeals to you if you take a little bit of time out of your day to go and find out what it’s all about.

The lies behind the truth surrounding ‘Rod Something’

The year 2008 was long and eventful one in the world of politics; trails were blazed and barriers were broken.

Perhaps no man better fits the spirit of this epic time than a man from Illinois, a man whose audacity and innovative leadership style have set a new standard for American governance: Rod Blagojevich.

Whereas sensationalistic publications and sensitive individuals cast aspersions upon this towering figure as “corrupt” or “disgraceful,” casting aspersions upon this towering figure as “corrupt” or “disgraceful,” he stands the power of the repeated use of expletives. In the end, Blagojevich may be the best example of what has driven thousands of profitable business ventures in America. Barack Obama may get more press with his intelligent speeches and oratory skills, but perhaps no person is more capable of truly connecting with people with his words on an emotional level than Rod Blagojevich.

Blagojevich is a person who let nothing stand in the way of his dreams ... not even federal laws or generally accepted standards of moral behavior.

The lies behind the truth surrounding ‘Rod Something’
Health conscious choices pave way to a better you

“Ugh, I hate eating healthy foods.”

That’s what my boyfriend said Sunday morning when I called him.

You see, my boyfriend, Charlie Grau, and I have decided to become health-conscious this year. We have started watching food portions, becoming more aware of the foods we eat and even discussed signing up for a runner’s marathon at some point.

In pursuit of bettering ourselves, Charlie now nags me – well, it sounds like nagging as he warns me about too much sugar – when I announce a trip to the drugstore to get a chocolate fix.

I will encourage – yes, encourage, although it may sound like nagging to him – healthier, leaner options especially when we dine out.

But a few weeks ago, I made a different choice.

I decided that come the new year, I would lose the extra weight and get in shape.

I concluded that one way to become aware of my health and my progress would be to better educate myself and write about it.

And to motivate myself to stay on track, I decided to share my journey with you without reservations.

Perhaps some of you have felt the heavy weight of an unhealthy life when you find yourself short of breath after climbing only one flight of stairs. Or the disappointment when you go to the department store and discover that the size 5 you used to wear no longer fits.

I know I have, and I no longer wish to feel that way.

Once and for all I have decided to make a lifestyle change and become a healthier being.

And I hope those of you who have felt that way are making a decision to a healthier you.

I propose that we do this together. Join me today and every other Wednesday as I bring you health, wellness and fitness information from local vendors and health professionals.

And if you’d like to share some tips or discover a health-related something that would benefit us all, share it with us. Let’s help each other.

Oh, and if you know of a potion that would make someone fully enjoy broccoli and mangoes, let me know. I will be grateful. And Charlie will thank you, too.

But I’m not blaming it on our relationship. Rather, I am blaming it on my decision to eat the foods I know I’m not supposed to eat, and the lack of physical activity – another conscious decision I made.

But in the new year, I would lose the extra weight and get in shape.

The sad truth is that since I started dating Charlie, I have gained more weight than I’d like to admit.

I have decided to become health-conscious in the new year. I have decided to share my journey with you without reservations.

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Men’s teammisses free throws; Bosilj scores 22 in close loss

Panthers coughed up the ball 13 times.

TROY, 69; FIU 58 (W)

Despite putting together one of their best efforts over the last three games, the Golden Panthers (3-11, 1-2 Sun Belt) could not stop the Trojans (6-7, 1-2).

The win gave the Trojans their first conference game and put the Golden Panthers under .500 against the conference.

Entering the second half, the Golden Panthers held a tight 33-32 lead.

Yet a 30 percent second-half performance let the Trojans creep their way back into the game to eventually win by a double-digit margin.

For the game, the Trojans shot an efficient 54 percent compared to the Golden Panthers’ 37 percent.

The Golden Panthers’ free-throw shooting and turnover problems have been the two consistent factors leading to losses.

They shot 8-of-15 from the free-throw line while allowing 19 turnovers.

Nineteen turnovers were a huge improvement from the team’s previous game vs. East Carolina, though, when they turned the ball over 31 times.

Junior guard Monika Bosilj led the team with 22 points, but shot just 4-of-16 from 3-point range.

Sophomore guard Michelle Gonzalez contributed with 12 points and six assists.

In just 22 minutes of play, Trojan freshman guard Kirsten Smith managed to lead her team with 18 points on 8-of-12 shooting.

Smith is averaging just six points per game this season.

Russell to have X-rays; Galindo finding groove

“We always play them tough. We just have to play smarter and not turn the ball over,” said forward Alex Galindo. “We have to make our shots, because every time we play them we don’t knock down our shots.”

The Golden Panthers are hoping guard Tremayne Russell will be available to play against WKU.

HOPEFUL

“I have an X-ray on Wednesday and the game is Thursday, so I will know by then,” Russell said of his status. “I’ve been dribbling with my left hand, left hand layups, getting my left hand ready.”

Russell has been out of action since a Dec. 6 matchup with Buffalo, recovering from a broken bone in his right hand.

“Feels good. I still have to get back in shape, but a few more games and I will be 100 percent,” he said. “I still need rhythm. My shot is falling but other parts of my game haven’t got back yet because I’ve been out so long.”

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HONOR STUDENTS: Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society is seeking motivated students to establish a campus chapter. Contact: Director@PhiSigmaTheta.org

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FACING THE CHAMPS

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

The Western Kentucky Hilltoppers have relied on Courtney Lee en route to conference championships the last two seasons, so his departure to the NBA has alleviated some of the pressure on WKU opponents.

Like they have most of the decade, the Hilltoppers have continued their winning ways, this time behind the scoring of A.J. Slaughter. Still strong, with former Hilltopper Courtney Lee now playing for the Orlando Magic, junior guard A.J. Slaughter (left) has taken his place as Western Kentucky’s main offensive threat. Senior forward Alex Galindo is returning for his third game of the season.

The junior guard has broken out this season with 16.2 points per game and 25.3-point field goals as of Jan. 5, both on pace to be career highs for the WKU slasher.

But as they are usually built, WKU (9-4) is not a one-man show, and FIU (5-11), will have their hands full guarding a few of the Hilltoppers’ top players. The Hilltoppers have four double-digit scorers, with Steffphon Pettigrew (11.8) and Sergio Krensch (10.4) joining Slaughter and Mendez-Valdez.

The Hilltoppers have come to South Florida in recent history and have won four of the last five matchups and every contest in FIU’s home gym since the 2005-06 season.

ANDREW JULIAN
Sports Director

To begin the season, the Golden Panthers knew junior guard Monika Bosilj would be counted on for the heavy lifting on the offensive end, and her 17.8 points per game – which rank second in the Sun Belt Conference – are indicative of her offensive output this season.

The Golden Panthers, however, have had trouble scoring outside of Bosilj, who has faced double teams all season.

FIU, on the season, is shooting just 37 percent from the floor and averages just 55 points per game, which ranks at the bottom of the Sun Belt.

Michelle Gonzalez has had to shoulder much of the scoring load and she has done so, as of late, upping her scoring average to 16.1 points per contest, with double digits in four of her last six games.

The turnovers are still a major issue for the team, which is a hold over from a season ago. At nearly 23 turnovers per game, FIU ranks last in the Sun Belt and this leads to fast break points for FIU opponents. These have been the rallies that have buried the Golden Panthers over the course of the season.

There is some good news – and it starts on FIU’s defensive end, where they allow just 41 percent from the floor.

FIU also ranks second as a team in blocked shots per game in the league and the interior defense has been excellent.

The Golden Panthers’ men’s and women’s basketball teams began their first of 16 Sun Belt Conference games with losses on Jan. 3.

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The biggest discrepancy between the two teams was the free-throw percentage.

Throughout the season, the Golden Panthers have had trouble shooting free throws and it hurt them as they shot just 5-of-15 from the charity stripe.

The Trojans made the most of their trips to the line by shooting 18-of-19, which set a school record for free-throw percentage in a game. They also turned the ball over just seven times for the game while the Golden Panthers had four players reach double-digit scoring.

Led by the tandem of Elisa Carey (1.6 bpg) and Jasmine Jenkins (1.4 bpg), FIU will attempt to neutralize the Western Kentucky attack, starting on the defensive end.

The Hilltoppers (7-6, 1-2 SBC) have had a tough start, playing five of the first 13 games against teams that played in the NCAA tournament last season.

Kenzie Rich leads the way for WKU, averaging over 14 points per game. She has attempted 102 of Western Kentucky’s total 159 3-pointers.

Armika Brown (14.6 ppg) and Amy McNear (10.7 ppg) are also averaging double figures.

WKU finds most of its issues on the defensive end, allowing the Golden Panthers look to halt three-game skid vs. WKU