University celebrates the legacy of Dr. King

LAUREN AGOSTO
Staff Writer

A dream and a message of unity came together in a speech by one of the most influential people of the Civil Rights Movement.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr’s legacy is being remembered and celebrated this week, and the University will take part in the commemoration.

This year marks a dream coming true. “Jan. 19, 2009 is the date this year and we celebrate the life of Dr. King.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Body Pump, Today Jan. 12, 7 a.m.: Bring your very best for the 20th by getting out of that holiday food binge by pumping your body to the UP Rec Center’s Blue Fitness Room.

Dance Auditions at GC Pit, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.: Show your skills as you stretch and prove them wrong. Audition tomorrow for the UP Rec Center’s Gold Fitness Room.

Wake-up and Spin, Tomorrow, Jan. 13, 7 a.m.: Wake up and spin your way to your body goals. The class is open up at the UP Rec Center’s Blue Fitness Room.

Dance Auditions at GC Pit, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.: Show your skills as you stretch and prove them wrong. Audition tomorrow for the UP Rec Center’s Blue Fitness Room.

Club Ice, Tomorrow, Jan. 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Ever considered, had a new hobby? Join Club Ice! There’s something for everyone at the UP Rec Center in the CI Ice Rink.

For the complete calendar, please see page 4 of THE BEACON.

SPORTS PAGE B

Women’s basketball season close, but leaves fourth straight game.

MBA program enlivens downtown

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

Anyone walking through downtown notices the strands of deserted walkways inhabited by homeless people, with the towering corporate buildings standing in contrast to the uninhabited condo.

The Miami downtown area has never been known for its vibrancy, but thanks to the collaboration of the University and South Florida community, the area is growing to become respected worldwide.

The search continues for a new University president as multiple committees prepare to gear up for what looks to be a long process.

On Dec. 18, David Parker, chairman of the Board of Trustees, sent an e-mail to the University community informing them about the efforts and advancements taking place in the search for the next president.

President Modesto A. Maidique asked the BOT in November to begin a search for his successor. He agreed to continue his role as president until someone is found to replace him.

Since 1969, FIU has grown to high standards with the assistance and perseverance of five University presidents: Charles E. Perry, Harold B. Crosby, Gregory B. Wolfe and Modesto A. Maidique.

Thanks to these four prominent and esteemed individuals, the University has grown to become respected worldwide.

As the e-mail Parker sent implies, it “won’t be a simple task searching for our next University president.”

Several steps are being taken to guarantee a credible candidate for a position so highly sought after.

Two committees have been formed to recognize potential aspirants for the position— the Presidential Search Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees Pres- idential Search Committee.

The PSAC “is made up of 25 members of the University and South Florida community. This group will work closely with the search firm to identify and select a broad pool of qualified candidates, which will then be forwarded to the BOT Search Committee,” according to a press release.

Senior Vice President Vivian Sanchez has agreed to work with the BOT/PSAC to “ensure that this presidential search is a thoughtful, transparent and inclusive process.”

She will take part in the committee by issuing a request for proposals so that the search committee “may select a national search firm with experience in identifying and recruiting university presidents.”

So far there are several candidates in mind for the position, but no word yet on any potential favorites.

Maidique has served as president of the University for the past 22 years. Throughout this time, he has added 22 doctoral programs, 18 undergraduate programs, opened a School of Law, a School of Engineering, the School of Medicine and the New School of International and Public Affairs.

Search for president continues

NATALEE GIL-DI BEO
Staff Writer

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Commemorative breakfast raises scholarship funds

KING, page 1

from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. in GC 140, at the University Park cam-

pus, and is free and open to the public.

Also part of the celebra-
tion at UP is the annual
breakfast held Jan. 16 from
8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., in
the GC Ballrooms.

The theme of the event
is “Stone of Hope,” and the
keynote speaker will be
Julianne Malveaux, the
president of Bennett College
for Women and a syndicated
columnist, who contributes
regularly to varied media
outlets like USA Today,
Black Issues in Higher
Education, Mr. magazine,
among others and has reg-
ular appearances on CNN,
BET and other television
programs.

“We look for speak-
ers who can, in some way,
eulogize the teachings of Dr.
King. We feel Julianne has a
story that she can share with
the University,” Spann-
Givens said.

Tickets for the annual
breakfast are on sale for $40
and proceeds will benefit
the MBA Scholarship Fund.

Students will also have
the opportunity to parti-
cipate in the “Community Day
of Service.” Jan. 17, when
volunteers will team up with the
AARP, the Miami-Dade
Housing Agency and the
Miami River Commission on
a beautification project
at the Robert King High
Towers, located at 1405
N.W. 7th St.

The Biscayne Bay
Campus will host the Martin
Luther King Jr. Youth Forum
and Peace Walk on Jan.
21, from 10 a.m. to 12:30
p.m., at the Wolfe Center
Ballroom.

The keynote speaker,
Kemba Smith, will speak to
300 Miami-Dade middle
and high school students.

Smith has received many
awards and recognitions for
her efforts to educate the
public about the devastating
social, economic and poli-
cultural consequences of the
current drug policies.

“Kemba also has a story
that many students can
relate to or learn from. We’re
in a time where there is so
much teen violence. I think
it is important to hear from
someone who got caught up
in it and was able to bounce
back,” Spann-Givens said.

Smith will also be speak-
ing at the dinner, which will
be held in honor of King,
at 7 p.m. in the Wolfe Center
Ballroom.

This event is free to stu-
dents, but there is a limited
amount of tickets available.

“Dr. King is just one of
those leaders who has
shaken the lives of so many
people. He has made such
a mark on all of us, I think
it is important to remember
his life and his legacy,” said
Doret Sawyers, director of
Multicultural Programs at
Biscayne Bay.

For more information
about any of these events
call (305) 348-2436.

DOWNTOWN, page 1

“It also provides oppor-
tunities for companies with
operations in the down-
town area and its surround-
ings, [which] can have their
employees pursue advanced
degrees in business.”

Casas said.

The downtown MBA
program consists of two
evening classes per week
and can be completed in 18
months.

Of the 1,500 students
enrolled, about 1,300 are
young working profes-
sionals who live in the
area and attend the evening
classes.

Luckily for the down-
town area, the program is
expected to grow about 28
percent in the upcoming
year, bringing in much
needed strokes of color.

Downtown center cuts the commute

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

TITAN CARR

TODD SU

WEN-JU CHIEN/THE BEACON

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The program offers student journalists a chance to work in a newsroom setting, covering local news, while being mentored by journalists and editors from the New York Times. The students come up close to these standards, I know what the standards are and what I consider top-notch journalism, said Diego Ribadeneira, managing editor of the Times Company’s additional publications. "The general notion is to expose student journalists to the best practices of journalism from The New York Times that we can, and hopefully give them the kind of tools that they need to improve their skills and to better prepare them for their future," said Diego Ribadeneira, managing editor of the program. The original institute began in 2003 at Dillard University in New Orleans. According to Don Hecker, director of the institute and its primary founder, the 2003 program was for African-American students who were enrolled at historically black colleges and universities.

In 2006, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists asked The New York Times to use the same model for their members, resulting in the 2007 Institute at FIU. "The program is going great. As someone who works at The New York Times and what I consider top-notch journalism, I know what the standards are and the students come up close to these standards," Hecker said.

In order to qualify and participate in the program, students had to be members of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. A team of journalists from The New York Times chose 20 students from a pool of 120 applicants for this year’s program. Applicants submitted a short essay, samples of published work and a resume. This year’s selected journalists came from 17 universities, including the University of California-Berkeley, University of Arizona, City University of New York, Northwestern University, University of New Mexico and FIU.

Wilma Hernandez, a senior journalism and international relations major, was the seventh FIU student chosen for the institute in three years. "It has been a great experience to be around the best reporters and editors in the country and probably the world," Hernandez said.

During the 10 days of the program, students worked in the new Scripps Howard multimedia lab in AC II 242 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on daily local stories and concluded the program with a journalism project. "The students are getting greater training by the most skilled journalists and editors in the country," said Allan Richards, interim associate dean for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

This was also the first time that video was incorporated into the students’ stories and projects. "So far, it’s terrific. There has been really solid enthusiastic interest in doing video stories. And it’s all of the students are involved in really compelling projects," said Erik Olsen, video journalist for The New York Times.

According to Richards, FIU was an obvious choice to host the institute because of the school’s location, high number of Hispanic students and good journalism program and also for having the first Spanish-Language Journalism master’s program in the country. "Our demographic here is more from the Caribbean. The West is more Mexican-American, so it is a very different Hispanic student body. They wanted to do one in the East and West Coasts," Richards said.

Students had their travel and lodging paid for by The New York Times and also received a $200 stipend. They were also provided with $100 for food and were compensated for any gas expenses.

Their articles were published in books and videos on www.nytimes-institute.com/miami09.

At the end of the program, the content on the Web site was published as a newspaper for those involved in the project, which was presented to students at a Koven’s Center banquet on the evening of Jan. 11. Next year, The New York Times Hispanic Student Journalism Institute will be held at the University of Arizona. Those interested in applying can visit the institute’s official Web site at www.nytimes-institute.com for more information. The application deadline is Oct. 24, 2009. "I have no words to describe the experience," Hernandez said. "All I can say is that I hardly sleep or eat and haven’t washed my hair in five days, which is unusual, but it has all been worth it."
University loses history, has chance to make more with closing of Gracie's

The University recently announced that Gracie’s Grill, the longtime inhabitant of the Rath- 
keller in the Graham Center, would be replaced by a Chili’s Grill. A scaled-down version of the popular 
restaurant chain.

The axing of Gracie’s Grill barely drew a peep from students, who have long since lost any 
attachment to the long-standing establishment. On the contrary, most are excited at the promise of a 
wider menu, a greater selection of alcoholic beverages and, hopefully, a livelier atmosphere. We 
cannot help but count ourselves among them.

To most, Gracie’s had become nothing more than the only place on campus to get a beer. And in 
many senses, that’s all it was. A victim of mismanagement, Gracie’s had grown stale, dark 
inside and outside of what was then the restaurant’s name—our memory of Gracie’s.

As sad as it is that DiStefano’s will be all but completely forgotten once the sign comes down 
and the new one goes up, it’s hard to defend an establishment that today’s student just 
does not care about.

For the University, a Chili’s, as a chain restaurant can bring, is infinitely less risky than trying 
to maintain Gracie’s. The Beacon can only hope that students will take the opportunity this new 
establishment brings and make it their own.

Make memories at this place, so that the future generations of Golden Panthers will have 
more reason to come here to have a beer and a bite to eat after a long day of classes; a place that is 
an integral part of the FIU experience.

And, most importantly, don’t forget people like Gracie DiStefano, who gave students food for 
no other reason than because they were hungry—whether or not they had a meal plan or even a 
Panther ID.

Israel must defend itself amid attacks

I went to my first rally on Sunday, which was held near the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach.

Jews, Christians, Americans and many others came together in solidarity to support Isra- 
el’s right to defend itself and to oppose the terror that has been reigning down on Israel for 
years. At about 1 p.m., people left to go to the rally in downtown Miami nearby the Israeli 
Consulate building, which had a mass of more than 1,000 people on the pro-Israel and pro-Pales- 
tin sides.

While war does help inspire change, killing of innocent civilians—that Palestinians, 
Israelis, Iraqis—is a very grave occurrence. I believe that peace through, war needs to come as a last resort.

At the rally, people on both sides were yelling similar lines on how the other side is to blame. My intention is to not make Israel seem super- 
riffic to others, but to make it understood that the Israeli government has 
every right to fight back against an extremist government who’d like nothing more than to wipe 
Israel off the face of the earth.

For the last three years, over 6,000 rockets have been fired from Gaza into Israeli terri- 
tories and so a reaction must be taken,” said Ruben Conitzer, a professor at FIU.

“The reaction is justified. We have learned a lesson from the 2006 war with Hezbollah that we have 
to be wiser and smarter than they were in that conflict,” Conitzer said.

Jews have been struggling with oppression for thousands of years. Egyptian enslavement, 
Roman rule, the Spanish Inquisition, the Russian pogroms, the Holocaust and many other inci- 
dents around the world serve as a reminder of the oppression 
Jews have faced. Because of this, many Jews have come to 
see themselves in their own order 
to determine their own future. That’s why the state of Israel was 
born.

In the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Egyptians occupied because it 
constantly suffers from 
terror attacks. Hamas, a terror organiza- 
tion, won the Palestinian parlia- 
mentary elections in January 2006 because many perceived 
the ruling Fatah party, a more secular group, as ineffec- 
tive compared to Hamas.

This is the type of conflict expressed in the Beacon.
Top hip-hop albums of 2008

1. **UNTITLED – NAS**
   - It was an album that initially had a controversial name, one the masses pressured Nas and his camp into changing.
   - Nonetheless, the veteran emcee can still touch a beat and deliver some of the most lyrical and articulate opinions on the social issues that dominate our lives.
   - Nas responds indirectly to his "Carter III" on the top of any list concerning 2008's best albums.

If you say the album is good, I'll shrug my shoulders and agree, but it is Wayne's worst overall since he grew his dreadlocks – and a real Wayne fan knows that.

In a thin but solid year, there is no outright classic album to report, but there have been enough nice tries so as to spark a debate as to which are the top-five hip-hop albums of the year.

**It's safe but definitely challenging.**

Wayne's voice dominated our lives.

Late opinions on the social issues that still can touch a beat and deliver views what Miami cannot.

But what Miami cannot view what Miami cannot.

**“It’s not an everyday thing.”**

Shaw described the rafting adventure as a mini roller coaster – only on the water. For being similar to a thrill ride, whitewater rafting also burns hundreds of calories. According to caloriecount.about.com, an estimated 340 calories per hour are burned rafting assuming a body weight of 150 pounds.

The whitewater rafting trip, which will be combined with a guided cave tour, is slated for May 14-17 with a registration deadline of April 17 at 5 p.m.

Although the cost of whitewater rafting trip has not yet been determined, the price will cover the round-trip bus fare, three nights lodging at Michtetel Inn and Suites, rafting, equipment, lunch and a casino tour.

The ski trip costs $275 for students and $300 for non-students and covers the round-trip bus fare, a Saturday all-activity wristband for ice skating, games and rides.

For more information, contact Matt O’Connor at (305) 348-7530 or Warren Shaw at(305) 919-4594. You can also visit www.fiu.edu/~camprec for details.

**“You can’t beat that price,” Shaw said.**

“I don’t think there’s anything else like that, even at other universities that offer trips like these.”

The ski trip will include a beginner’s skiing lesson, snowboarding, ice skating and more.

The ski trip is slated for May 14-17 with a registration deadline of April 17 at 5 p.m.

Early bird registration deadline for the ski trip is Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. Those who register by this date will get a $25 discount off the regular cost.

Early bird deadline for the rafting trip has not been announced yet.

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Tribe Called Quest, Tip's solo work this time headlining the best rap group in history, A
could produced nearly every beat
of the type of artist who can create a great album
hip hop to Broadway-style musicals.
acoustic rock, but they'll also drop "99
soundtrack, but as another writing tool.
Looking past the fact that it's a boring
than just serving as background noise.
seamlessly integrate the music so that it
soundtrack.
"Scrubs" here, but rather because it has
me, it's always a little
seasons on NBC and for
ABC network after seven
thankfully.
terrible holiday specials, the spring televi-
examining the state of pop culture.
ster," which was arguably the best effort of
American Gang-
This Atlanta emcee is not the typical
tracks.
Blu returned from his successful debut
with producer Exile, “Below the Heavens,”
and delivered another nice effort this year with
another producer, Mainframe.
Blu speaks from the heart on every rhyme and
shows why he is one of the best up-and-
coming artists in the game today.
though the album did not get any love on
the commercial airwaves, Johnson & Johnson
sounded an awful lot like the hip-hop of the
90's.
3. PAPER TRAIL – T.J.
This Atlanta emcee is not the typical
southern artist. Pharell once called him the
Jay-Z of the South for a reason.
T.J. went in on this album and wrote his
material (as opposed to simply freestyling)
for the first time since his second album and
as a result created a long album with few fluff
tracks.
Though most people are more familiar with
the billboard hits T.J made this time around, it
is the rapper's lyricism and flow throughout
the rest of the album that make him shine, not
just as a southern artist, but as a hip-hop artist
in general.

4. JOHNSON & JOHNSON –
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Blu returned from his successful debut
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90's.

5. SEEING SOUNDS – N.E.R.D
This project can be grouped with the alter-
native section or the hip-hop section, but the
bottom line is that it's one of the best albums of
the year.
Misunderstood in many ways, many of the
songs on the CD have deeper messages than
most notice.
Pharell, Shay and Chad Hugo work behind
brilliant beat after brilliant beat and good ideas,
but the fact that none of them are great rappers
stops the album from reaching classic status.
HONORABLE MENTIONS
Lil Wayne: “Tha Carter III”, Kanye West,
“808's and Heartbreak”, The Game: “LAX”;
Atmosphere, “When life gives you lemons,
you paint that sh** gold.”

Q-tip, T.I., Johnson & Johnson make the year’s best
Defense hurt by forward’s record day

WOMEN, page 8

Both teams could not find their stroke from behind the arc as they combined 4-of-34 from 3-point land.

“That’s just not typical of us, but to know we got the win with the way we got it feels really good,” coach Cowles said.

The Golden Panthers recovered from an early 14-deficit, but it was late in the second half when the Lady Hilltoppers made the final push to capture the win.

With nine minutes to go, Western Kentucky went on an 11-1 run to make the score 50-39. That closed the door on the Golden Panthers’ hopes of making a comeback.

Carey believes the team did improve in some areas that it will use for upcoming games.

“We handled the press a lot better than before, along with our shooting and patience,” Carey said.

The Golden Panthers have now won two of three games since their season-high six-game losing streak from Dec. 6 to Dec. 27.

“We took care of the ball, we made free throws,” Rouco said. “It takes time for kids to learn to play in environments that they haven’t been in before. It’s coming, but it takes time.”

Senior, newcomers collaborate to win

MEN, page 8

Conference for most of the game but ended with just one 3-point field goal less.

“They didn’t get our best. That’s their best, but we matched them,” Rouco said. “Our kids came through with big plays.”

FIU led 36-33 at the half and expanded their lead as the game proceeded into the second half. After the team made just two 3-pointers in the first period, Dominguez combined for seven makes from behind the arc in the defining second half.

“They got a whole lot of confidence, and that’s a big boost because everything starts falling for them,” said Hilltopper guard A.J. Slaughter. “We can’t let a team like this get confidence because they get on a role.”

**STAYING HOT**

Freshman Freddy Asprilla continued his hot streak for the Golden Panthers with 21 points and carried the team offensively in the first half with 16 points. The center has scored at least 12 points in six of the last seven games.

The Golden Panthers now have won two of three games since their season-high six-game losing streak from Dec. 6 to Dec. 27.

“We took care of the basketball and we made free throws,” Rouco said. “It takes time for kids to learn to play in environments that they haven’t been in before. It’s coming, but it takes time.”

National championship a farce, fans helpless to take action

JULIAN, page 8

fully apparent to me that none of the power brokers want to push for a playoff. The power brokers are cheating the fans helpless to take action.

“We can’t let a team like this get confidence because they get on a role.”

**SWARMED:** Sophomore guard Michelle Gonzalez tries to get free from two Western Kentucky defenders on Jan. 7.

The power brokers are lining the pockets of their players and coaches and then the fans. The paradox is that all we do and, in many cases, can do, is watch and accept the fraud the power brokers feed us for the sole purposes of lining the pockets of their conferences for the prospect of greater television contracts the next time around. All we can really do is complain in print and on message boards. It’s really a shame because the first group, the players, should really have more of a say. Of course, this is the NCAA we’re talking about.

### CLASSIFIEDS

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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

1987 Chevy SS Monte Carlo for sale $4500 or best offer. New pearl white paint job, headers, exhaust, rebuilt motor. 305 horse power. For more information, call (305) 753-0838.

Fontainebleau 2/2 close to FIU. Ideal for two roommates, private patio, wood floors, washer/dryer, 1,000 sq. ft. $1,200 + deposit. Call 786-282-9956 or e-mail morej0908@bellsouth.net

### SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING (M)

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<thead>
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<th>TEAM</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
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*All records up to date as of Jan. 8

### SUN BELT BASKETBALL SCORING (M)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>PTS</th>
<th>AVG/G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Troy</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Texas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All records up to date as of Jan. 8

### SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING (W)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>CONF</th>
<th>PCT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Tennessee</td>
<td>12-4</td>
<td>4-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky</td>
<td>8-6</td>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2-2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Atlantic</td>
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<td>1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida International</td>
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<td>1-3</td>
<td>.200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*All records up to date as of Jan. 8

### SUN BELT BASKETBALL SCORING (W)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>PTS</th>
<th>AVG/G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Tennessee</td>
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<td>1163</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>68.1</td>
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</table>

*All records up to date as of Jan. 8

### AMIGAS

AMIGAS is a health program that creates a comfortable setting for women to discuss topics related with health, in particular the risks dealing with HIV/AIDS.

**Who can participate in AMIGAS?**

Single Hispanic women from 20 to 44 years of age

**How can you participate in AMIGAS?**

You can call Kath or Ana at 505-513-3202 or at 505-219-9567

For your participation you can receive certificates with a value up to $270.00
Not enough opposition to bowl system

I think it’s time I resign myself to the fact that nobody cares.

Time that I face the reality of the situation – that the games have nothing to do with the players; they have only to do with the revenue.

The worst part is that when I read about the “Super Alliance” 11 years ago, I was beside myself with joy.

I thought, “Nebraska will win, Michigan next time,” and I couldn’t have been happier.

Now, I couldn’t be more unsatisfied.

If being left out of a two-team one-and-done deal isn’t enough to rally the athletic hands of the major administrators, both at the University of Florida and to a lesser extent, Hawaii, over the fact that nobody cares.

This is a money issue, purely in the fact that nobody cares.

With apologies to Boise State, Utah, and to a lesser extent, Hawaii, over the course of the BCS, this is a major conference issue and it’s those participants whose continued silence perplexes me.

Since 1998 and the first BCS title tilt, 12 schools, who had legitimate claims to at least be in the title game, were left out in favor of a team perceived to be more deserving.

Some of these coaches have been quite vocal about not getting an opportunity to play for the big trophy, but this issue extends far up the ladder – over the heads of Bellotti, Carroll, Tuberville and the beacon of justice that Urban Meyer was purporting to be in 2004.

This is a money issue, purely in the hands of the major administrators, both at the University and conference level.

If being left out of a two-team one-shot deal isn’t enough to rally the athletic directors and presidents of the worthy contenders into a coalition, then it’s pain-

MAJOR UPSET

Concentrated effort leads to biggest win of season

JONATHAN RAMOS
Astd. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers set a season-high in points, field goals, 3-pointers, fewest turnovers in a game and free-throw percentage on Jan. 8 in their first game in the retooled U.S. Century Bank Arena.

That’s what it took to beat the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers, who entered the game having won 20 of their last 22 games all-time vs. FIU, and advanced to the sweet 16 round of the NCAA tournament last season.

The Golden Panthers saved their most efficient effort of the season for the right game.

“It’s a big win for our program. We were praising them when they beat Louisville, right?” Rouco said of the Hilltoppers.

“Because Louisville beat Kentucky.”

FIU (6-11, 1-3 Sun Belt) held on to an 81-79 victory against WKU (9-6, 3-1) to earn their first conference win in dramatic fashion as the Golden Panthers staved off a late Hilltoppers run.

The Golden Panthers nearly lost the game, however, as a 72-57 lead with 6:24 minutes left to play evaporated into just a two-point lead with roughly three minutes left. Rouco’s frustration showed as he kicked an AT&T sign next to the bench, a sign that shattered and briefly quieted the crowd.

“That’s what got me upset. I got upset because we only had four turnovers until the last two minutes of the game,” said Rouco, who reiterated that the incident was an accident. “I’m not going to stop anymore and I apologize for my outburst.”

FIU knocked down 7-of-8 free throws down the stretch to seal the victory.

“Every kid made a big shot,” Alex [Galindo] made some big shots, played very unselfish. We came with the game plan that we wanted to post him on their smaller guards and I think the plan was great on putting him on the block and playing through him,” Rouco said.

GALINDO

Indeed, the plan worked and Galindo scored 21 points on 9-of-12 shooting.

The loss prevents the Golden Panthers from tying the Hilltoppers for second in the Sun Belt but it’s a huge win for an improved program.

The Golden Panthers will try to build on their momentum Wednesday as they host Louisiana-Lafayette.

Second-half struggles compromise game

SERGIO BONILLA
Astd. Sports Director

On a night when the U.S. Century Bank Arena became an official name for the Golden Panthers’ home arena, FIU and Western Kentucky gave it a cold reception by missing a combined 87 shots.

Just 19 points in the second half and 29 turnovers for the game allowed the Lady Hilltoppers (7-7, 2-2 Sun Belt) to overtake the Golden Panthers (3-12, 1-3) 54-47 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena on Jan. 5.

“We got it done on the defensive end of the floor,” said Western Kentucky head coach Mary Taylor Cowles. Golden Panthers head coach Cindy Russo declined to comment after the game.

The loss prevents the Golden Panthers from leveling out their conference record. They have 12 Sun Belt opponents left and with 14 rebounds. “I’ll give her the ball every time if she’s going to post up hard like that,” Bosilj said.

Sophomore forward Michelle Gonzalez fouled out late in the game and finished with two points on 0-for-10 shooting.

Meanwhile, sophomore forward Amika Brown could not be stopped as she made nine of her 13 shot attempts; the Lady Hilltoppers made 19 field goals as a team. Brown set a school record with 21 rebounds.

“She just made a conscious effort to get it done on the boards,” coach Cowles said of Brown’s performance. “She was so focused, she had a very balanced effort.”

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