Lobbying in ‘Tally’ may save med school

JULIA CARDENUTO
News Director

Insufficient funding has been at center stage for quite a while, and on March 11 University representatives went to the campus to try to secure the future of the University.

Held annually, FIU Day saw university administrators, students, alumni and trustees go to Tallahassee and lobby for the University interests.

The main issue addressed this year was the College of Medicine for which FIU representatives lobbied to secure the $11 million funding for the college, informing state lawmakers about the importance of the college for the community and the revenue that it will generate for Florida.

“Given the circumstances, it was a very good day,” said President Modesto A. Maidique. “But we are fighting some very serious odds because the budget keeps getting worse but we keep insisting that our medical school must be funded.”

Students react to tech fee proposal

JULIA CARDENUTO
News Director

A new technology fee, which may be implemented in the Fall, was the subject of two hearings on March 9 and 10 at the Biscayne Bay and University Park campuses respectively.

Chaired by Cathy Akins, assistant vice president of student affairs, the Technology Fee Committee led the hearings and took note of student input regarding the new fee. This same committee will eventually decide whether to implement the fee and, if so, how much the fee should be.

The tech fee would expand the University’s wireless capabilities as well as the creation of a virtual student lab that would grant access to high-cost applications such as Photoshop to students connected to the Internet, according to Min Yao, vice president of the Department of Information Technology and chief information officer.

A PowerPoint presentation showed the areas the tech fee would improve and included electronic classroom, extended computer lab hours, printing labs that may eliminate printing fees and Microsoft Office on virtually all University computers.

“We are here today to explain to students how FIU will use the technology fee to improve technology,” Akins said.

She said the fee would be 5 percent of tuition, which comes out to $54.11 per credit hour. However, state law allows the committee to recommend the desired amount.

Student turnout was low in both hearings and those in attendance were mostly Student Government Association members. Those who were present had mixed reactions.

“I work everyday, we’re struggling to pay all the fees we already have. As a student, I don’t think we need to have a fee increase, we don’t need to be upgrading everything,” said Kerry-Ann Carby, international relations senior who was present at the hearing held at BBC.

Stacey Holley, a senior psychology major, agreed.

“There are so many fees that we already pay for. Are these upgrades even necessary? Like the Microsoft licensing – how long would it take for them to be implemented?” Holley said.

According to Yao, it would take between three and four months.

But Keydianne Fletcher said the upgrades were overdue.

Maidique addresses budget

When University President Modesto Maidique addressed members of the Faculty Senate on March 3, he attempted to lighten the mood of a speech filled with serious subjects: further budget cuts, loss of revenue and the economy.

“I’m the last guy to be pessimistic, but that doesn’t mean I’m not worried,” he said.

Maidique claimed he had been getting mixed signals from economic experts he had spoken to. He joked that the only positive outlook came from an executive from Omnicom, who predicted that there would be two to three decisions from both government and the private sector in the next six months. If made wisely and appropriately, the decisions, according to Maidique, would “get us out of this mess in a year.”

If the wrong decisions are made, then “we may be in this for the long haul.”

When Maidique asked the executive what the right decisions should be answered. “We don’t know what the right decisions are.”

The president’s story drew laughter from most faculty members, it provided the backdrop to the focal point of the meeting: addressing issues relating to the budget crisis and how members in the community can help to stop arthritis!

“Given the circumstances, it was a very good day,” said President Modesto A. Maidique. “But we are fighting some very serious odds because the budget keeps getting worse but we keep insisting that our medical school must be funded.”
Tech fee garners mixed reactions

TECH FEE, page 1

“FIU is way behind in technology, so I don’t see a problem with this fee,” said Floridiana Press, a senior psychology major who was also at the BBC hearing. “In class I like to take notes on my laptop because now I don’t have to write but sometimes, I can’t charge it. We need more outlets for laptops in classrooms.”

After the committee said that its job is to listen to students input, Carby questioned its effectiveness.

“I don’t know about these hearings. It’s been published where students don’t go around campus, like the second floor of the Wolfe Center, where there is nothing around for students because the cafeteria just moved,” Carby said. “The e-mail was sent last Wednesday, and today is Monday. It’s such short notice.”

In response, Akens said that the committee was also given a short time frame to make a decision because it needed to make recommendations about the fee and its uses based on student’s input by the end of this month. Akens also said that this fee if approved, would be recurrent. However, she added that the gathering student’s input, the committee will suggest that the fee be re-evaluated to consider what’s still necessary.

Carby, however, remained unmoved.

“I really don’t support this,” she said. “During times like these, where the economy is right now, we don’t need upgrades. If FIU is worthed because we are behind in technology, then we will always be behind because it keeps improving, and so they will need more funds in the future. If they are upgrading without upgrades we don’t need, we should think of economizing.”

Governor’s Council-UP President Arthur J. Meyer addressed the committee about the possibility of using the fee to fund the establishment of PantherTV, a television network to be run by student government.

“I have the proposal for PantherTV set up, but we don’t have the funds to run it. Would it fit in the realm of the tech fee to fund this project? I know this committee won’t make the decision. One of the primary issues is whether we have the materials,” said Meyer at the hearing held at UP.

Ben Badger, SGC-UP pressing secretary, asked if the tech fee would lower fees for online classes.

The majority of the state institutions are in this fee together. This committee won’t decide how the fee will be used. We will be making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as to how to invest the money and how large the fee should be,” he can tell you however that the majority of the fees go to the development of courses, not just to the University,” said Elizabeth Ramirez, assistant provost of Academic Affairs.

Other members of the committee include: Sholom Steinert, SGC-BBC speaker of the Senate; Kaimsha Paul, SGC- BBC vice president; Helena Ramirez will submit a speaker pro- tem for SGC-UP and Nick Antiole, SGC-UP lower divi- sion senator.

Additional reporting by Pamela and David Barrios.

Alumni involvement raised as concern

FACULTY, page 1

that despite the grim news, FIU will survive and be long after he and other members of the faculty are gone. “FIU will live forever,” he said.

During the Budget Committee report, Kathy Blais, a School of Nursing senator who heads the committee, urged members of the Senate to buy University licensed products. The licenses are $25, proceeds of which go toward scholarships.

“It doesn’t help our time line but it’s another source of revenue for the students,” Blais said.

She also urged faculty as well as students to spend money at the University. A primary concern was a complaint she received from students that books were more expensive at the FIU Bookstore.

“The good news is that the bookstore’s contract is up for renewal, so that is something we will take into consideration,” Blais said.

Caroline Simpson, who represents the College of Arts and Sciences, stressed the importance of the Alumni Asso- ciation, which constantly makes phone calls to alumni around the country.

University Park Student Government Council President Al Carby, however pointed out that the Alumni Association was doing its job and suggested that the director of Alumni Relations come to the meeting.

According to Meyer, the group has a list of roughly 100,000 alumni, but “The Office of Alumni Relations does have a phone bank, contacting alumni on a regular basis and pulling money from them,” Meyer said.

SGC prepares for elections

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

Election season for student government looms each day with the April 1 and 2 voting period just three weeks away. Candidates will begin campaigning for the two-day voting period and cast their votes.

The computer lab in the Graham Center will all be open to students as a voting site. According to the SGA Elections Code, voting will take place on the second Tuesday and Wednesday after spring break. This year however, the polling will be held on Wednesday and Thursday.

The elections will be open to all students through their Panthertos accounts. Students will be able to log into their accounts during voting for the president, vice presi- dent and representative at large.

Students may also vote for positions including lower division sena- tors, senators for specific colleges, honors college representative, housing representative and graduate student representative in accordance to the student’s enrollment status.

President pleased with outcome

According to Richard Grafl, BBC managing editor, “we pushed the voting dates back a day to allow for a days worth of campaigning and of promotion of the actual elections.”

The results of the elec- tions will be announced the following day in the Graham Center Pilot during a ceremony.

Students will only be eligible to cast their votes toward candidates who have campaigned in their campus which they are currently enrolled in a majority of their classes. All students who are registered to vote for the president, vice presi- dent and representative at large.

He added that the situa- tion might change, espe- cially with state revenue estimates due Monday. “This is critical to determine the chances for SGC and Mad- ique,” there was a “great deal of good will” and “stronger political support” for the former.”

“We believe we will have a cut, but I am not sure how,” Madigue said.

“We will do everything we can for [the College of Medi- cine] to be funded at the level we need,” Saul echoed Madigue’s sentiments.

“We’re cautiously opti- mistic; it’s a very tough year with the overall economy and declining state revenue. It is a very tough sell,” he said.

He added that the medical school was a very important component of the campus, the student body and the state.

“The medical school is FIU’s No. 1 priority that we’re representing up here,” Madigue said. “The other priority we have is to cut nothing,” said Arthur J. Meyer, SGC-UP president.

Additional reporting by David Barrios.

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Additional reporting by David Barrios.
Marine affairs certificate program awaits approval

MELISSA BOON Contributing Writer

The proposal for the University’s certificate program in coastal and marine affairs is moving toward approval.

“Certificate programs don’t require any special resources, unlike departments and majors,” said Peter Craumer, associate professor for the Department of International Relations and director of the Coastal and Marine Affairs Certificate Committee. “Therefore, we are optimistic that the University will approve it.”

The certificate in coastal and marine affairs is designed to include a variety of environmental science classes from different schools at the Biscayne Bay Campus, while taking advantage of the campus’ coastal location.

According to the University’s course catalog, certificate programs are structured combinations of courses with a common base of interest, from one or more disciplines, into an area of concentration.

The proposed certificate will require 18 credit hours: at least three credits of core science courses, three credits of core policy and law courses, three credits of other primary courses and zero to six credits of electives.

Some of the courses that would count toward this certificate include Marine Biology, Oceanography, Ecology of South Florida, Biology of Coral Reefs and Environmental Journalism.

Some courses from disciplines other than physical sciences will also count toward the certificate, including courses in social sciences, the arts and humanities.

The University’s Faculty Senate approved the certificate on Jan. 27 but it still needs to be approved by administration.

The Faculty Senate consists of 60 senators, elected proportionally by the faculty of schools and colleges, serving as the faculty’s voice in decisions, policies and academic matters that are important but unaware of it.”

The certificate program may differ.

“Some feel that if students get involved, however, the incentives for partaking in the program may differ. “By offering the certificate to students as an extension to their degree, I worry that it would become a cynical way for them to make more money after college,” said Peter Borrebach, a marine biology professor.

“The biggest concern for the success of this environmentally-friendly movement is student involvement, according to Craumer and Grimm.”

Former Miss FIU crowned Miss Miami ‘09, looks ahead

LORENA ESTRADA Staff Writer

Dressed in trendy dresses, evening gowns and bikinis, 18 young women took the stage March 1 to compete for the title of Miss Miami 2009 at the Miss Miami Scholarship Pageant.

But only one young lady could crown new Miss FIU Jenise Fernandez.

The 21-year-old journalist got the judges’ attention with a lyrical dance performance to the song “Heart” by Alaine during the talent portion of the competition at the Jay Morton-Levinthal Campus of the Jewish Community Center in Kendall.

“I am honored and humbled to represent Miami, the city where I was born and raised,” Fernandez said.

She first strutted on stage in a yellow bikini and in a red, strapless evening gown later that night. In the interview segment of the competition, she named her mother as her role model.

“My mother supported me unconditionally and has always encouraged me to follow any dream crazy after another,” Fernandez said.

The Miss Miami Scholarship Pageant is a local affiliate of the Miss America Organization. Contestants in the pageant are required to have a personal platform – a cause the individual will promote throughout her tenure.

As Miss Miami, Fernandez will continue to promote her platform, called “Creating Miracles Now,” which supports the Children’s Miracle Network, a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children by raising funds for children’s hospitals.

Fernandez works with several hospitals to promote her platform and said she holds Miami Children’s Hospital dear to her heart.

“I am so passionate about this cause because my older sister was a miracle child, and Miami Children’s Hospital saved her life,” Fernandez said.

During her spare time, Fernandez volunteers at the hospital, playing with children. She has raised more than $137,000 for the hospital during the University’s 25-hour Dance Marathon on Jan. 31.

As Miss Miami, she will spend a year attending community events and will also be preparing for the 2009 Miss Florida USA Pageant, which will take place on July 11 in St. Petersburg, Fla.

“The moment they announced her name, I already knew the road to Miss Florida was ahead of her,” said Robert Borgmann, Fernandez’s boyfriend and a graduate student. “She has made her family and me very proud.”

The Miami native won a $500 scholarship from the Miss Florida Scholarship Pageant. The pageant awarded more than $7,800 in scholarship money from previous pageants, which include Miss FIU 2007 and Miss Fort Lauderdale 2008.

Jennifer Grimm, BBC environmental coordinator, has been working on making this campus more environmentally friendly.

She began her work at BBC about three months ago, when the University was granted a $140,000, two-year grant from Jane’s Trust for the Coastal Environmental Initiative.

“The grant expired last year, but the Coastal Environmental Initiative is designed to attract students from all over the country and among them, we are unique in having this program in coastal and marine affairs certifi cate, including courses in social sciences, the arts and humanities.”

“We are on the bay, so everything we do impacts the ocean,” Grimm said. “We want people to understand where they are living and have a little more responsibility in terms of protecting the environment and conserving it, and I think the key is education.”

However, the biggest concern for the success of this environmentally-friendly movement is student involvement, according to Craumer and Grimm.

“A lot of students think that if they aren’t in marine biology or environmental science, they can’t get involved with the program,” Grimm said.

Some feel that if students get involved, however, the incentives for partaking in the program may differ.

“By offering the certificate to students as an extension to their degree, I worry that it would become a cynical way for them to make more money after college, rather than being environmentally friendly,” said Peter Borrebach, a creative writing master’s student. “If students don’t absorb the content of the classes, it’s just another trend.”

CLASSIFIEDS

JOBS

SUMMER JOBS: Recreation Camp Counselors/Supervisors for summer recreation program 6/8/09-7/31/09 for children ages 5-14. WS/Lifeguard and Maintenance Aides (509-9000) Exp. desirable. City of Plantation (west of Ft. Lauderdale) 400 NW 73 Ave., Plantation, FL 33317 or www.plantation.org to download application.

PAGEANT

Caribbean Pageanty is seeking contestants for their 4th Annual Miss Miami Carnival Pageant, being held Sunday September 20, 2009. For more information please call 786-356-0869.

STRONG DEFENSE: Officer Steve Fagan of Public Safety demonstrates basic self-defense techniques at the “Strong Invincible Women” event, with volunteer Joshua Nuna, business administration sophomore, in Panther Square on March 11. Fagan demonstrates the open fast punch (top) and an arm lock to control an attacker (bottom).
SELBSTIICHT

Product marketing taking a more ‘macho-centric’ approach

By VANESSA ESPINEL Staff Writer

You probably either drive or walk by it everyday. Occasionally you feel the urge to take the detour inside. All it takes is one look through the windows at all those buns and you want to keep coming back for more. If you guessed the gym, then that is precisely where you should be heading afterward; with burgers reaching almost 1,300 calories, Burger King is the ruler of fatty fast food.

But it’s not the calories that are so intriguing to me—it’s BK’s commercials. Have you noticed that BK’s advertisements send a clear message here—that men need beef—not “chick food,” to be considered “real men.”

With this ad campaign being the sesam seed bun on the burger for BK, could the establishment be up to something? “I have seen many women easily eat a full-sized Whopper, even without a “Trick or treat” order and women eat a peculiar commercial for one of its products, Pepsi Max. The 30-second ad depicted different scenarios in which men experienced intense pain, for example, being hit on the head with a bowling ball. The commercial’s announcer then proceeded with, “Men can take anything—except the taste of a diet cola—until now. Pepsi Max: the first diet cola for men.”

Diet cola for men? It never occurred to me that diet soda was solely for women. Is the light blue Pepsi not “manly” enough? Or is it the word “diet” that is too feminine? In other words, I, as a woman, should not purchase Pepsi Max because it is too tough for me. “Men as a demographic have largely been overlooked as consumers ... It’s no surprise that BK and Pepsi recognized that when it comes to eating out and beverage decisions; the marketing communications have rarely spoken directly to men,” Rodriguez said.

Burger King, with its plastic giant-headed (and not to mention scary looking) king character, makes perfect sense now, with a higher rate of fast food consumption.

SEXIST ADS

Credit: USA Today

The healing of our wounds will require the people to insist that they will not forgive and forget without ever truly knowing.

of these issues being the economy, of course. I fully understand and appreciate the pres-
ident’s determination to this and other vital national issues, but it causes me to wonder: If we aren’t going to seek the truth about the actions of his constituency—the most pressing
credibility not to pursue a thorough look into the allegedly criminal activities undertaken by his predecessors. This is not a new topic arising solely from the election of a new administration. While George W. Bush was still in office, talks of impeachement on the grounds of these allega-
tions had been raised by activists and politi-
cians alike, notably Congressman and former presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich. I, like many others, have become progress-
ively more aware that this was not your ordi-
nary group of corrupt politicians. I reached my breaking point when I read in a Newsweek poll that more than 40 percent of Americans thought, “Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq was directly involved in planning, financing, or carrying out the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.”

To order such an investigation is not a tool of partisan politics as some like to claim, but rather it is the only way to grant us citi-
zens a sense of closure at the end of this near-
decade of clouded information and half truths. This has been difficult for the people to insist that they will not forgive and forget without ever truly knowing. Most vital, however, will be the bravery of the president to venture where none has been, to truly deliver the change that we voted for.

The unwarrented wiretaps that violated the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the refusal to talk about the linkage between the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and our unilateral illegal invasion. The most heinous, and inno-
cently the crime with the most supporting data, is the use of torture and other means of cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment of those held captive in the name of national security. Whether or not one is aware or believes that these actions may have actually been allowed to go on under our noses (or behind our backs I should say) is not what is impor-
tant; the fact is these are serious allega-
tions that are, at the very least, in need of an investigation.

So what does President Obama have to say about all this? The answer: Not as much as people would like him to. In an interview with the Huffington Post, he states, “My view is also that nobody’s above the law and, if there are clear instances of wrongdoing, that people should be prosce-
cuted just like any ordinary citizen... I will take the president’s fall, but...”

The president’s fall, but...”

I think it’s important to consider the president’s views on this issue and the impact it will have on the future of the country. The president’s views on this issue and the impact it will have on the future of the country. The president’s views on this issue and the impact it will have on the future of the country. The president’s views on this issue and the impact it will have on the future of the country.
Comedic duo makes transition from TV to big screen

If you like road-trip movies and sex comedies, then Miss March might be a movie that will satisfy you. Miss March tells the story of a young man named Eugene (Zach Cregger), who falls into a coma and wakes up four years later to hear that Cindy (Raquel Alessi), his once virginal high-school sweetheart has since become a naked centerfold in a magazine. He and his sex-crazed best friend, Tucker (Zach Cregger), decide to embark on a cross-country road trip in order to crash a party at the legendary Playboy Mansion and win back the girl of his dreams.

On their way to the Playboy Mansion, they become the targets of crazed fireman and Tucker’s crazy girlfriend (Molly Stanton) and hitch a ride with a famous rapper sporting a provocative name (Craig Robinson) and two Russian lesbians. Trevor Moore and Zach Cregger are cast members from the IFC series “The Whitest Kids U Know,” a comedy sketch show that is reminiscent of Monty Python’s Flying Circus. Moore and Cregger sat down with The Beacon at the Shore Club in South Beach as part of the Miss March Comedy Tour, where they went to a screening of their movie to participate in a Q&A session with the audience. They also performed at a local comedy club with their “Whitest Kids U Know” companions. Fox Studios approached the comedic duo with a script someone wrote for them about two sex-crazed guys breaking into the Playboy Mansion.

“We were not crazy about the script,” says Moore. “It just was not something we would do.” The studio then told Moore and Cregger that they could rewrite the script, as long as they kept the founding premise that Cregger’s character falls down the stairs, slips into a coma and wakes up to find his former girlfriend posing in Playboy. The screenwriting team of Moore and Cregger changed the conception of the characters so that one guy (Cregger) is terrified of sex and the other guy (Moore) is obsessed with sex. They are polar opposites, but share the same problem as they put sex up on a pedestal. Moore and Cregger said they wanted to tailor the script to their sense of humor and make it something they would want to be involved with and something the fans of their TV show would like. “It is basically a road trip sex comedy for people who are sick of road trip sex comedies,” Moore said.

Aside from being cast members on the show, Moore and Cregger have written with their fellow cast members and directed the majority of the episodes of “The Whitest Kids U Know.” They looked at the TV show as boot camp training for Miss March and went straight into production of the film as soon as their second season of the show wrapped. “It was more normal to do this instead of us just writing the script and passing it off to someone else,” Moore said.

“If there would have been another director, we would have been miserable and they would have been miserable,” Cregger said.

When it came to shooting the film, they said that the most difficult scenes to shoot were also the same scenes they looked forward to shooting. “I think the scene at the end in front of the mansion was difficult because there was a lot of action, people coming from different directions, and it took two days to shoot that scene,” Cregger said.

Despite the film being a sex comedy, Cregger says that there is a message in Miss March. “When you treat sex like it is everything, you are going to be messed up,” Cregger said.

“I think it is cool that people get the message, but for me, I want them to come away saying ‘That was the funniest road trip movie I have ever seen,’” said Moore. “Even if they do not like road trip movies, I want them to come away saying ‘I do not like road trip movies, but I like Miss March.’”
Steve Mesa
Staff Writer

The 26th annual Miami International Film Festival will come to an end Saturday night.

All the stars and filmmakers will come in droves on Award Night as the final big film will be shown.

The 26th annual Miami International Film Festival will come to an end Saturday night. The final big film will be shown at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Miami.

The film will be the special screening of "Empty Nest" starring Cecilia Roth ("All About My Mother") and Oscar Martinez, and Oscar Martinez, is about a middle-aged couple (Roth and Martinez) looking for ways to escape their empty nest syndrome when their youngest adult child moves out of their home.

Before the film begins, the MIFF will present awards to films that have been placed in a competition category. There are many awards to be given out on Award Night, including some new competition categories.

The World Cinema Competition category showcases the latest works by new, up-and-coming filmmakers from around the world. Ibero-American Competition is a competition showcasing dramatic features by first and second-time directors from Latin America, Spain and Portugal. Winners of the World Cinema and Ibero-American Filmmakers are eligible for a $25,000 Knight Grand Jury Prize.

The Shorts Competition category features documentary films from around the world where social issues, diverse cultures, icons and inspiring people are an integral part of this category. The Shorts Competition category features three programs of the best short films from around the world. The winners of the Shorts Competition will be eligible for the Miami Dade College Grand Jury Prize, which is worth $2,500.

One new competition category this year is the Jordan Alexander Ressler Screenwriting Award, which is presented by the Jordan Alexander Ressler Charitable Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego. The prize of $5,000 will be awarded to the winning screenwriter in the Ibero-American Competition.

Another new competition is the International Film Guide Inspiration Award presented by Wallflower Press and The Criterions Collection. This award will go to the winning emerging Ibero-American filmmaker. Prizes awarded to the winner include a special Awards Scroll, a copy of the 2009 edition of the International Film Guide and various series of films on DVD and books.

A film that was showcased at MIFF is a documentary called "Celia the Queen," which was directed by Mario de Varona and Joe Cardona, an FIU graduate. The legacy and larger-than-life presence of the great Celia Cruz fuels this tribute to one of music’s and Cuba’s true groundbreakers. Filled with powerful performances, candid backstage moments and rare historical footage, the film features interviews with musicians that were inspired by Celia Cruz and fans, including Andy Garcia, Gloria Estefan, Quincy Jones, David Byrne and Wyclef Jean.

"Celia the Queen" is a documentary that is told by Celia’s peers, fans, close friends and family. What made this film interesting is that it showed how Celia Cruz’s music influences everyone in the world. There is a scene in the film where the filmmakers go to Japan where there is a salsa club and several people dancing to the music of Celia Cruz.

The filmmakers also managed to sit down with the Queen herself, Celia Cruz, before she passed away in 2003.

Some scenes shot in black and white feature a young Celia Cruz played by former American Idol competitor Christina Christian as she moves around somewhere backstage, approaching people that have impacted Celia Cruz’s life.

"Celia the Queen" is a well-told biography of a life that is as colorful and energetic as the subject of this film.
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BASEBALL: FIU 11, FLORIDA MEMORIAL 4

MID-WEEK WIN

Grand slam makes up for big FMU first

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

It looked like it was going to be one of those games where nothing went right for the Golden Panthers.

Starting pitcher R.J Fondon (1-0) loaded the bases in the first inning after hitting two batters and walking one. The freshman righty’s outing was short-lived after giving up three runs on 18 pitches and hitting three Florida Memorial batters.

But the Golden Panthers’ fortune would change in the next inning.

Down 3-0 after the top of the first, the Golden Panthers made up for their erratic start by scoring five runs on three hits. Most of those runs came on a grand slam by freshman Garret Wittels. After the grand slam, the Golden Panthers’ (7-3) ugly start was quickly forgotten as they beat the Lions 11-4 at University Park Stadium on March 11 in a makeup game. It was the first time in 27 years that both teams played each other.

“It kind of wakes you up and get’s you where you got to be. I just think in the first inning we didn’t come out how we normally do. We just stepped up right after that inning, put it behind us and moved on,” said Wittels, who hit his first collegiate run in collegiate debut.

Despite his erratic play, Golden Panthers coach Turtle Thomas said Fondon would be fine.

“I just wasn’t one of R.J.’s best innings,” Thomas said.

Between both teams, 75 pitches were thrown in the first inning. Mason McVay, Andre Vazquez and Tim Joe pitched four combined innings to shut out the Lions, striking out six and giving up one hit.

“We had a rough first few innings, but our pitching stepped up, guys stayed and kept pushing. Any game you come out, anyone can beat anyone. It’s a good team win,” Wittels said.

Thomas used the makeup game to give some playing time to underclassmen and a chance to get some live action. Seven out of the 10 starters on the field were freshmen.

“The biggest thing we wanted to do tonight was to play some guys that had been working hard in practice and deserved to play. A lot of them stepped up and did a really nice job for us. I was pleased with several of them and the job they did,” Thomas said.

The shortstop finished the night only giving up one run. Justin Leah relieved Fondon in the first inning halted the Lions’ early surge. He lasted 1.2 innings and struck out two and gave up one run in collegiate debut.

Despite his early surge, play, Golden Panthers coach Turtle Thomas said Fondon would be fine.

“I just wasn’t one of R.J.’s best outings,” Thomas said.

Despite the Golden Panthers’ offensive numbers down from last season, the team is on path to have a winning record as it has not lost a series this season.

Starting off the offense is freshman Pablo Bermudez who is hitting .348 with a .444 OBP and two home runs. Bermudez has set up the offense this series.

“You hope they could keep pitching well, pitching effectively,” coach Thomas said.

“When you don’t give the other team any runs, you’re always in the game, you have a chance to win.”

Meanwhile, the 6-7 Trojans have a 5.43 team ERA. But the Trojans also bring a brand new weapon to their arsenal in Jake Sullivan. The junior transfer from Georgia Tech has a 3.00 record with a miniscule 0.84 ERA. In 21 innings of work, he’s allowed just two extra base hits and four walks compared to 21 strikeouts.

Overall, the Trojans’ offense is better than that of the Golden Panthers in several categories. They have a better batting average, on-base percentage, slugging percentage and are scoring 7.2 runs per game

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Starting off the offense is freshman Pablo Bermudez who is hitting .348 with a .444 OBP and two home runs. Bermudez has set up the offense this season, but Tyler Townsend is the most feared hitter in the lineup. He’s hitting .500 and has walked more by any other player in the lineup; his eight RBI also leads the team.

This series could be an opportunity for the Golden Panthers to begin the season with a strong Sun Belt Conference record; last season, the team ended with a 12-18 record in the conference. Both teams are currently 2-1 against Sun Belt opponents. These are the first official road games for the team this season.

The Golden Panthers are 6-2 at home and 1-1 in neutral sites.

SBC contenders set to tangle in Arkansas

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

The last time the University of Arkansas-Little Rock Trojans faced the FIU Golden Panthers, they scored 37 runs in a three-game span.

The 2006 Golden Panthers’ pitching staff posted a 7.12 team earned run average (ERA).

As both teams bump heads this weekend, the Golden Panthers’ revamped staff is still opposing batters and sporting a lean 2.35 ERA. Head coach Scott Rembisz, Tom Ebert and Corey Polizzano.

“It’s a tough time for us,” coach Thomas said.

“Before becoming an assistant coach, Delmonico was the head coach of the Tennessee University Volunteers for 18 years where he compiled a 699-396 record. When coach Thomas first hired Delmonico he knew the 50-year-old was a special hire.

“When you hire staff members you wonder whether you’ve hit a single, double, triple or home run,” the owner of the grand slam with the hiring of Rod Delmonico, said coach Thomas. “He brings so much to the table from a recruiting standpoint.

Former assistant coach leads surprise WBC team

OMAR MARRERO
AP Writer

A scrappy Netherlands team caught the Dominican Republic and the rest of the baseball world by total surprise.

Twice.

Now, all those Dominican stars are done at the World Baseball Classic.

Eugene Kingsale singled in the tying run and scored the game-winner in the 11th inning Tuesday night as the Netherlands rallied for a 2-1 victory over the heavily favored Dominicans, earning an astonishing spot in the second round.

“This is a miracle. The Dominican Republic is one of the best teams in the world,” Netherlands manager Rod Delmonico said with tears in his eyes.

“It is difficult to describe what took place. These kids have fought for three days. I have never seen a team with this much passion.”

Delmonico was an asst. coach on the FIU baseball team last season. Head coach Turtle Thomas hired him during the 2008 summer, but he took over the Netherlands national team on Jan. 1, 2009. He didn’t leave FIU without helping the program develop young talent and recruit future players, according to tinpports.com.

“It was the second time in four days that a Netherlands squad made up of little-known players upset the Dominican Republic, considered one of the favorites coming into the 16-team tournament thanks to a roster filled with major league All-Stars.

Netherlands players were still on the field celebrating 15 minutes after the game ended.

The Netherlands (2-1) will face Puerto Rico (2-0) on Wednesday for first place in Group D. Puerto Rico needed a late rally to win the first game between the teams, 3-1 on Monday. Both clubs begin second-round play Saturday in Miami.

“Tonight we are going to try to rest, even though it will be difficult with all the emotion,” Delmonico said.

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