WEATHER

For the complete calendar, please see page 8 or your trick shots and make some new Room tonight to rack ‘em up at Lambda 8:00 p.m.: inner peace.

Guzman was mandated to submit these records as one of three classes listed on a Feb. 16 ruling by the legislature after Guzman was charged with not fulfilling his tasks as elections commissioner, including attending at least one SGC meeting per month during which he, or a member of the elections board, was to submit a report about updates in the elections process. The judiciary based its March 12 decision on an e-mail sent to them by “Senate Leadership,” stating: “As of now, he has failed to attend meetings and complete his office hours as stated in your decision letter.” Guzman was unavailable for comment for this article. Elizabeth Funes, a member of the elections board, is currently acting as elections commissioner and overseeing the campaigning and elections process. Elections are scheduled for April 1 and 2.

An open e-mail was sent to members of FIU’s student body by SGC-UP Senate Speaker Jean Roseme on March 16, looking for applicants to fill the position of elections commissioner while also seeking to fill four seats in the

ELECTION, page 2

BUSINESS

The College of Business Administration has one of the top 100 undergraduate business programs, according to BusinessWeek magazine. The R. Kirk Landon Undergraduate School of Business at FIU was ranked 15 in the nation for public two-year programs, 55 among all public schools and 98 overall, ahead of Temple University, Georgia State University and the University of South Florida.

“It acknowledges that we have one of the leading business schools in the nation,” said Joyce Elam, executive dean of the College of Business Administration in an interview with The Beacon. “When students are looking for business programs to attend, they look at these ratings to determine the schools that they want to consider.”

Other Florida universities that ranked this year include the University of Miami, the University of Florida in Gainesville and the University of South Florida in Tampa.

FIU has more than 6,000 students enrolled in undergraduate business courses, more than 1,000 graduate students attend its Alvah H. Chapman Jr. Graduate School of Business and 1,000 business professionals are involved in one or more of its professional and executive education programs every year.

The Landon Undergraduate School of Business has been ranked among BusinessWeek’s top undergraduate business programs twice in the last three years. The Chapman Graduate School of Business has been ranked four times in BusinessWeek.

“I think it’s remarkable that we were ranked so high. Being recognized in the whole United States as one of the top business schools, it’s really an honor,” said Luis Rivera, a junior.

In addition to its frequent appearances in BusinessWeek, the School of Business has also been featured in several other publications.

BUSINESS, page 2
Online competition awards funds

There are other ways to get money for school, but people are lazy. A 30-second video is kind of easy, though.

Paula Gutierrez
breathin biology major

JONATHAN DAVILA
Staff Writer

Filling out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid isn’t the only way to get financial help this year.

Tuition Tales, the second annual online competition hosted by Upromise.com, begins on March 24. The contest allows members of the Web site to upload a 30-second video explaining why they, or a person they know, should get help with tuition.

“We started the program as a way to get Upromise customers money for college,” said Debby Holherr, spokesperson for Upromise, a subsidiary of SLM Corporation.

Entrants must create a Upromise account to submit a video. All entries must be submitted by May 5, and the videos must be no longer than 30 seconds and no larger than 50 megabytes. Contestants must be at least 18 years old to enter.

After the entry deadline, first-round voting begins.

The 12 contestants with the most votes between May 6-12 will receive a $250 Bed Bath & Beyond gift card.

Second-round voting takes place from May 13-19 and three winners will be selected—one from each three categories: children ages zero to 18, undergraduate students and graduate students.

The three grand prize winners will receive $10,000 for college expenses.

“I’d pay my loans, my housing loans and buy books,” said 21-year-old strategy and marketing major Paula Gutierrez.

Gutierrez’s sister, Juliana, said the contest was a good way for students who don’t normally apply for more conventional scholarships to have a chance at earning money for college.

“There are other ways to get money for school, but people are lazy. A 30-second video is kind of easy, though,” she said. “It’s an interesting opportunity.”

Past entrants have submitted videos ranging from amateur 30-second clips of the contestant speaking to the camera to professionally edited videos. A grand prize winner from 2008 stared into the camera and sang a song he had written.

“Some of them were creative and fully edited. We’ve even had claymation submitted,” Holherr said. “One family of eight even did their own take on ‘The Brady Bunch.’”

Aside from implementing the Tuition Tales contest, Upromise is dedicated to helping students earn cash for college. They have partnered with Dell, Best Buy, Exxon, Apple and many other companies that have agreed to submit portions of cash spent on their products back into Upromise members’ accounts.

During the voting phases, Holherr said the site would feature an instant win game with daily prizes, but no further details could be provided at the time of this writing.

Cash saved up in a member’s Upromise account can then be disbursed online. For more information on Tuition Tales and Upromise, visit Upromise.com.

Magazine gives School of Business high marks

It benefits FIU because it raises the academic reputation of our programs ... in the industry as a whole.

Joyce Elam, executive dean
College of Business Administration

The National Society of Hispanic MBAs honored FIU’s College of Business Administration with the Brilliance Award for Educational Excellence.

“lf I feel proud to have the opportunity to attend one of the top schools in the country. Graduating from a school that is highly recognized will make my degree more prestigious,” said Sergio Martinez, a sophomore.

In 2008, AmericaEconomia magazine ranked the Chapman Graduate School as the 22nd best business school in the country, and M.A.B.A. program at both universities as Boston University, Tulane, Dartmouth, George, Emory, Michigan and University of Texas at Austin.

“It benefits FIU because it raises the academic reputation of our programs in the business and the University as a whole,” Elmam said. Other ranks in the survey include reviews of other aspects of the universities such as faculty to student ratio, job placement grade and teaching quality grade.

As Miami’s public university, it is very rewarding to see that our focus on delivering a world-class education and the importance of an undergraduate business education is recognized by publications such as AmericaEconomia.

“With the strong reputation that the meeting was called on too short a notice and was violating the Sunshine State laws.

“The purpose for calling the UWC meeting was to weigh our options. Without removal of the elections commissioner and four open seats on the elections board, we just want to make sure we are heading in the right direction before elections happen,” Rosene said.

Another meeting of the council is scheduled for March 25.
FBLA-PBL place high at districts, head to nationals

JOSHUA BALLANTINE
Staff Writer

The Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda is the “largest and oldest business student organization in the world with over a quarter of a million members,” according to its national website.

The District V Competitions are a precursor to the state and national conferences coming up this year, where FIU will compete against schools all around Florida and the United States.

Fourteen out of 23 FIU students won first place and 23 of 29 placed in the top three of their respective events at the 2009 FBLA-PBL District V Competitions held this past weekend at Broward College.

“We are very impressed with the results,” said FBLA-PBL President Abdel Perera, who won second place in the Future Business Executive competition at the national conference last year in Atlanta. “We are expecting big things from the state and national conferences.”

Britania Huggins, president of the International Business Honors Society at the University, won first place in International Business, one of the most competitive events at the competition. At the national conference last year, all eight of the attending FIU students qualified in the top 10 of their event. Each event is either a written test or a performance with about 50 competitors. This year, 20 FIU students will be attending the national PBL conference.

Although the FBLA-PBL chapter was started just last year at FIU, member Yanyn San Luis was already elected the vice president of the largest of the four PBL regions nationwide, the Southern Region. At the national conference this year in Anaheim, Calif., individuals will be encouraged to “get the edge” – the president’s theme this year.

San Luis, a political science major, will be unable to participate in the national competitions because she is the vice president, but at the conference she will represent FIU, which is a great recognition for the University.

“That is one great thing about this club,” said Perera, a political science major. “You don’t have to be a business major to be a part.”

Attendance has grown to 45 official members, and 35 FIU students are expected to participate in the state conference next week. There are more than 15,000 members of the PBL in Florida.

Membership for PBL begins in August and ends in February with a fee of $30. Throughout the year, members can participate in fund-raisers for their trips, such as running concessions at the American Airlines Arena. Last year, both Perera and then Vice President Lilian Dennis raised enough money to cover their whole trip.

With FIU planning to become one of the top 15 urban-serving public research universities in the country by 2015 as a part of President Maidique’s “FIU at Fifty” initiative, the success of the FBLA-PBL chapter would help this goal. The business program has already received a lot of attention from magazines such as the U.S. News & World Report, The Princeton Review and Financial Times. Success at the national conference will be a big lift for the school.

“We had a 100 percent success rate last national competition. We expect the same this year,” Perera said.

New student ambassadors to bridge student, faculty gap

MEENA RUPANI
Contributing Writer

Thirty-three new student ambassadors were announced by the executive board of the Student Alumni Association on March 9.

Student ambassadors serve as leaders for the University community. Applicants are chosen by the previous year’s ambassadors with the executive members of the SAA, however, the SAA is looking for specific qualities in a candidate.

All candidates must maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout the year. Ambassadors must also be able to manage their time and represent FIU in a professional manner at all events.

The program is highly competitive, according to Dianne Cordova, assistant director of students and campus outreach who was also present for the announcement.

“It is a really tough choice this year. There were many that applied for the positions,” said Laura Fajardo, director of the student ambassador program.

The ambassadors, once chosen, are responsible for hosting alumni events as well as tailgates and football games and, most importantly, they serve as the link between faculty, staff and alumni.

In addition, they are able to assist the Office of the President and the Office of Alumni Relations for certain events.

“In the past, they have helped us in events including commencement, freshman convocation and the geopolitical summit,” Cordova said.

One by one, the names were called and the board of the SAA adorned each new ambassador with beads and a nametag that officially appointed them as part of the 2009-10 ambassador team.

One of the names selected was Manuel Romero.

He said he expects to represent the University in a way that he has not before.

“I want to portray FIU spirit – I’m looking forward to hosting school events and portraying FIU in a positive light. Also, I want to make others care about our school,” said Romero, a junior medical engineering major.

Some were chosen for a second time to serve as a representative for the University. One of these students was Paul Ashe. For Ashe, it was the involvement in student life that persuaded him to apply for the program.

“I love the tailgates and the football games, and it’s also a great way to see a sense of FIU pride in addition to joining faculty and alumni at events,” said Ashe, a senior advertising major.

Each year the SAA chooses about 30 candidates for the University Park campus and about five for the Biscayne Bay Campus.

According to Cordova, this year the SAA received about 42 applicants which is about the same amount as 2008. They typically receive 40 to 50 applications each Spring.

Following this year’s announcement, the applicants embraced and rejoiced with the executive board of the SAA. Cordova said she was especially excited to work alongside these skilled groups of students.

“The 2008-2009 team was amazing and I am fortunate to be working with such wonderful students,” Cordova said.
SGC-BBC proposes budget allocation for next fiscal year

**Barbara Quijano**
Asst. News Director

Bombardeled with a strenuous economy and suffering from budget cuts, the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus distributed funds for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

A BBC budget meeting took place March 13 in the Wolfe University Center to decide how much funding, which is determined by the Activities and Services fee, should be allocated to each student organization, recreational activity and facility.

The A&S fee is based on student enrollment at the University, it costs students $10.52 per enrolled credit each semester.

"The administration designs the distribution of the A&S funds through the estimated enrollment process, and that’s how every government bases it on, in terms of how many tax dollars they’re going to get," said Sholom Neistein, speaker of the SGC-BBC senate.

"Last year, the budget was $12 million, now they cut it to $9.6 million, but I’m very confident that it will be increased," said Neistein.

"On March 6, the Student Government Association met to discuss the University-wide budget allocation, the amount of which is determined by the A&S fee. The fee is due for an increase this year.

Rosa Jones, vice president of Student Affairs, was present at the meeting along with Matilde Gramling, director of budget and personnel for Student Affairs and UP and BBC representatives.

From this meeting, the remaining available funds are split between UP and BBC, where each sect then meets and discusses its exact budget.

"These propositions are not final due to a possible increase in student enrollment, which would increase the funds in the A&S budget, raising the amount of each allocation.

Members present at the BBC budget meeting were SGC-BBC President Ana Maria Silva, Vice President Kenisha Paul, Co-chairers Carlos Becerra-Pineda and Neistein, as well as assistant director of campus life and orientation, Rafael Zapata and Gramling.

At the meeting, Becerra-Pineda went over each line-item belonging to every organization, allocating funds accordingly.

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, each organization had a specified amount of funding allocated to them from SGC-BBC, but for the upcoming year, things may turn out differently.

"Every single organization, recreational activity and facilities was cut, because we did not want to show precedence of one organization to the other, that would be biased," said Neistein.

"But these are tentative values, these numbers will change. This is a rough estimate of what’s going to transpire if the A&S fees don’t increase, but (SGC-BBC) is 95 percent sure they will increase."

Because the fiscal year ends June 30, there is worry as to when organizations will know the correct allocation and if they will get the desired amount.

"By the end of March, Jones has to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’," Gramling said. "The A&S committee, that I know of, hasn’t even started, so I doubt by the end of March we’ll have that."

"We’re at a point where we need to do more evaluation of the importance of the services that are offered," said Jones in an article published on The Beacon on March 9.

In regards to whether the organizations at BBC will get funded the amount SGC-BBC wants to, 99 percent of the time the administration doesn’t change the proposed allocations, according to Zapata.

These organizations include Bay Vista Hall Council, BBC Campus Life and Orientation, Multifaith Council, Student Programming Council, Student Organization Council, Panther Power, Broward SGA and Campus Life.

On March 25, a University-wide meeting will be held to discuss the projected funds of the A&S fees, according to Neistein.

There are no set dates as to when the A&S fees will be determined and finalized, but if they are, both UP and BBC will meet again and refine the proposed allocations.

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**School of Journalism and Mass Communication**

Reaccreditation standards met, University review still in progress

**Natalya Cohen**
Contributing Writer

Students are not the only ones under tight scrutiny to meet academic requirements.

Every 10 years, different schools within the University need to meet several criteria to pass reaffirmation of accreditation, a voluntary self-assessment and external review of schools and their professional programs.

"It improves the quality of our teaching," said Joseph West, dean of the School of Hospitality Management and BBC vice provost.

The University undergoes the reaffirmation of institutional accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Set in Atlanta, SACS is an educational accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to improve education in the south through accreditation, according to its Web site.

SAC representatives review the schools’ documentation, visit the schools going through the accreditation process and write a report of the assessment, including a recommendation to the commission of the accrediting organization.

On Feb. 16, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, the agency responsible for evaluating journalism and mass communications programs in colleges and universities, visited the School of Journalism and Mass Communication for four days.

"Six people from all over the county made up the team," said Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, SIMC dean.

There are nine standards that ACEIMC representatives review. They judge, deliberate and eventually inform the school of their decision, according to Frederick Beverly, SIMC professor.

These standards include:

- The mission, governance and administration of the school: The ACEIMC looks for a mission statement, a strategic plan and effective leadership from the administration.
- Curriculum and instruction: The school needs to demonstrate a balance between theoretical, conceptual and professional skill courses for students to be competent, and that its instruction and curriculum is demanding and current. The student-faculty classroom ratio should not exceed 20:1.
- Diversity and inclusiveness: The school is required to have a written plan for achieving a curriculum, a diverse faculty and student population. There should be no signs of any type of discrimination against gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- Scholarship: Research, creative and professional activity: The school should support, require and reward faculty research.
- Student service: The school should provide students with the support and services they need for proper learning and ensure their timely graduation. Students should also be well-informed about the different activities, requirements and policies of the school.
- Assessment of learning outcomes: The school should constantly evaluate student learning to improve its curriculum and instruction.
- "We did excellently," Kopenhaver said. "We scored full compliance in all nine standards for our undergraduate program and graduate program."
- The ACEIMC committee will meet in Chicago in mid-March to prepare its preliminary report.
- The committee will then meet in May in Portland, where the ACEIMC council will finalize accreditation.
- The University as a whole will be visited by SACCS next year to seek reaccreditation.

Although accreditation is a voluntary process, there are several disadvantages to students attending non-accredited schools. Federal and state financial aid is only available to students attending accredited schools.

"The Marriott Hotel just awarded us $1.7 million toward our program abroad in China. We would have never gotten that had we not been accredited," West said. "Loves just recently signed to award student scholarships of $10,000 for the next five years."

Another advantage to accreditation is that the process provides schools all over the United States the chance to re-evaluate and better themselves, according to West.

"Universities have to re-evaluate the credentials of every faculty member," West said. "Faculty members are now accountable for students’ outcome, which as a dean I love."

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**Kampai! A Japanese Toast**

Fresh Idea: The Friends of Wine Club hosted a sake tasting March 12. So members could compare flavor profiles from Japanese-style rice wines to traditional grape wines, which are usually tasted. The sakes were paired with sesame encrusted tuna, miso soup and seaweed salad.

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The Beacon
4
Monday, March 23, 2009

KAMPAI! A JAPANESE TOAST

Nanako Yonezawa/The Beacon

FRESH IDEA: The Friends of Wine Club hosted a sake tasting March 12. So members could compare flavor profiles from Japanese-style rice wines to traditional grape wines, which are usually tasted. The sakes were paired with sesame encrusted tuna, miso soup and seaweed salad.
Fish data helps Everglades restoration, research

NATHAN VALENTINE
BBC Photo Editor

When grad student Megan Dunphy-Daly and marine scientist Kirk Gastrich aren’t doing research in their lab, they are playing hooky in the marshes of the Everglades.

But this trip was no walk in the park. It was a boat ride.

Leaving the Biscayne Bay Campus around 5 a.m. on Feb. 24, the duo had one goal in mind: insert three transmitters into wild snook caught in the Everglades.

The team headed toward Shark River Slough (which feeds into the Everglades and goes into the Gulf of Mexico) where they met up with an electrofishing team.

Electrofishing is an alternate method for sampling fish. Instead of using fish traps or large nets, an electrical current controlled with a교회 is released into the water via two electrodes, stunning fish in the immediate vicinity.

The immobilized fish are then scooped up with nets, identified and measured, according to grad student Philip Matich.

“Our sampling is standardized, with 5 minutes of pedal time, more than 120 meters of shoreline,” said Jennifer Rehage, electrofishing team leader.

The electrofishing team collects the fish, while the data collection team scrubs in for the dirty work.

“Our research is looking at the roles of large consumers in Shark River, and how environmental conditions affect Florida fish behavior and habitat use,” said Matich, who helps analyze the data in the Dr. Michael Heithaus Marine Community Ecology Lab in the Marine Science Building at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project provides a framework for the restoration, protection and preservation of central and southern Florida, including the Everglades, as well as research funding at Florida International University. The project aims to increase seasonal freshwater flow to the lower Everglades. This would cause the salinity level to decrease in the lower Everglades and coastal wetlands, according to the CERP official Web site.

“This may change the dynamics of the ecosystem in the Shark River,” Matich said. “Our research will be used to advise managers on the possible results of doing this and how restoration efforts should best be planned.”

According to Rehage, fish catches vary depending on the season, peaking during dry season between February and May.

“We get a mixture of species in our samples,” said Rehage. But on this day Dunphy-Daly and Gastrich were only interested in snook and gar.

Rehage’s team presented five fish to the duo to begin data collection and tagging.


“It never ends.”

The field work conducted by Dunphy-Daly and Gastrich included a quick surgery to insert an acoustic tracking transmitter into the fish, which by rule of thumb should be at least 45 centimeters based on the size of the transmitters surgically implanted, according to Matich.

The minimum size limit is based on previous lab experience with fish that were not affected by surgery.

“There are no official regulations on size requirements in our research permit,” Matich said. The transmitter’s dimensions are similar to a wine bottle cork.

It takes about two to three weeks for the incision around the transmitter to heal completely in bull sharks, for which the same methodology as the snook is applied, according to Matich.

Of the three snook that underwent this procedure, all were released and able to swim within minutes of the surgery’s completion. It takes less than a day for the fish to resume normal behavior, according to Match.

Tagged animals are tracked as they swim by any of the 41 monitors placed around the survey area, according to Dunphy-Daly.

“We track the fish in order to understand their behavior and habitat, and to determine their role in the ecosystem,” Matich said.

Data collected at the harvesting site included exact GPS coordinates of where the fish were caught, salinity of the water, dissolved oxygen content of the water and water temperature. Along with habitat field samples, the data illustrates how animals influence the system as predators and how marine nutrients are deposited in the estuary, according to Dunphy-Daly.

The electrofishing team and the data collection team finished by 2 p.m. Feb 24.

Including travel time, a typical day of field work in the Everglades begins at 4 a.m. and ends at 9:30 p.m., according to Gastrich.

If the teams receive more funding, they will continue their research tracking fish in the areas affected by CERP’s efforts, but accomplishing daily goals in a timely manner is still cause for celebration.

“That was successful, short and sweet,” said Dunphy-Daly. “We got the job done.”

TAG AND RELEASE: Kirk Gastrich and Megan Dunphy-Daly measure a garfish before taking a fin clip sample and releasing the fish back into Shark River Slough in the Everglades, Feb. 23.

Students to partake in whitewater rafting, caving trip

ADA ALVAREZ
Contributing Writer

Whitewater and dark caves await student participants of the whitewater rafting and caving trip sponsored by the Recreation Center.

The trip, from May 14 to May 17 in Hico, W.Va., is part of the Adventure Recreation program, which is designed to take students to athletic excursions to places outside South Florida.

Participants will get wet on a six-hour whitewater rafting activity in the New River in the Southeast corner of West Virginia.

The activity is coordinated by Adventures Mountain River, a rafting company. Assistant West Virginia Shaw, assistant director of campus recreation, rafting experience is not required, but swimming ability is expected.

The river does have level three and four rapids, and rocks from one through six.

“It’s a class five river that we’ve never been on before,” said Matt O’Connor, intramural and sports coordinator for the Recreation Center.

“This is a little over my budget but I’m trying to save to get in the list. This will sure be a way to say goodbye to my last semester here at FIU,” said Max Lopez, senior marine biology major.

Anyone interested in participating in the trip is welcome to register, according to Shaw, who said that both students and non-students can register by filling out the forms available at the Recreation Center at both University Park and Biscayne Bay campuses.

Registration is open to a maximum of 50 people until May 4. The deadline for earlybird discount (25 percent off total fee) is April 17.

The cost of the trip is $300 for Univer-

sity students and $325 for non-students. This fee includes the roundtrip bus ride to West Virginia, rafting equipment, a cavern tour and three nights in the Howard Johnson Express hotel in Beckley, W.Va.

Only one lunch and one snack are provided during the trip. Students have to pay for all other expenses, according to Shaw.

“We want to make it the least expensive for students,” said O’Connor. “With the economy the way it is, people don’t have money to spend.”

Although the Recreation Center at UP has organized several trips this year, including a skiing trip to Colorado, this is the only trip that the BBC Recreation Center has been involved in.

“I’m really happy with the trips that are being offered here,” said Laura Hernandez, graduate student of hospitality and management. “I kayaked, played paint ball and now I’m going water rafting – all for the very first time, it is really exciting.”

For more information contact Shaw at (305) 919-4595 or O’Connor at (305) 348-7530.
CANDIDATES should focus on transparency, protocol revisions

After considering the challenges that lie ahead for our school and the lingering issues that the current student government continues to grapple with, The Beacon feels that there are certain priorities that must take precedence in the eyes of any candidate who wishes to serve the students of FIU.

High on this list of these priorities is the issue of transparency. While student government leaders continue to give voice to many concerns regarding this issue, there is much that has yet to be done. Student apathy toward the day-to-day operations of SGA is bothersome to many, yet students can hardly be asked to pay close attention when so little information is provided to them.

The Beacon works hard to inform students about the process, yet SGA must also do its part and make critical information more accessible. Meeting minutes the way they are currently kept must be improved upon, as they are usually rife with errors. Video and audio recordings of all meetings should be made available, and meeting minutes and roll call votes must be posted online. Student government leaders must be willing to put their names behind their votes, and allow students to watch them debate key decisions.

An important part of making SGA more transparent and getting students more involved is through a frequently updated Web site. A more informative and navigable site is long overdue. Aside from being used to not only post relevant information, it should foster communication with constituents.

Certain aspects of SGA protocol call for revision as well. Since student government members must adhere to a grade requirement, the process through which a student’s eligibility is gauged should occur at the beginning of the semester. That process was conducted well into this semester, and a few members were forced out after having attended several meetings. This makes the Senate practically useless at times, as it

The problem, according to an article from MiddleClass.gov, is that anyone making it in the world simply by having it played near them for 30 seconds. Blip-Radio Discs and high definition television make us feel like we are actually immersed in what we are watching, whether it be a high-octane, utterly exaggerated car chase or the electric atmosphere of a UEFA Champions League final.

With these advancements in electronic technology, it is inevitable that video games have not been left behind. The three main systems, Microsoft’s Xbox 360, Sony’s PlayStation 3 and Nintendo’s Wii, are all far cries from the 16-bit days of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, with a level of realism only rivaled by what is seen in movies.

Gaming enthusiasts are not addicts. There are telephones that can identify any song in the world simply by playing. Whether it be a high-octane, utterly exaggerated car chase or the electric atmosphere of a UEFA Champions League final.

Games such as World of Warcraft allow millions of players to interact not only with the game world, but with a massive amount of other players. I cite World of Warcraft specifically because it arguably has the highest following of gamers, with more than 11.5 million monthly subscribers according to Blizzard Entertainment, the developers of the gaming phenomenon. Players devote vast amounts of time to the game, trying to attain the coveted Level 80 and the epic gear picked up along the way.

Many people regard the game to have an addictive property because of how long people play. According to Nickyeyer.com, a Web site that compiles World of Warcraft statistics, players usually devote about 20 to 22 hours on the game per week. Some people believe World of Warcraft, and video games in general, have the same ability to hook players as nicotine does for smokers.

As a gamer myself, I would be biased to defend my past-time, but even from an objective point of view, the idea of video games or the Internet being addictive is just plain laughable. Addiction is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary as “a compulsive need” for a habit-forming substance, such as heroin or nicotine; in other words, substances that cause a biological need or want. There is no evidence that video games cause a biological addiction in players. Some would argue that the addiction is psychological rather than biological, but the American Psychological Association reached a consensus on the subject, deeming it too ill-researched to be a proven disorder.

There are social factors that contribute to this as well. Gamers are usually seen as socially inept outcasts. The double standard here is that it is not considered that most gamers are not socially inept and lead normal lives. The ones who seclude themselves don’t do it because they are addicted. That’s just their personality.

Dan Loton, a graduate of the University of Florida in psychology, ran a study on “problem gamers,” gamers who see all social sides to play their video games. He found that only one in six of the 621 surveyed exhibited signs of social shyness and ineptness. Such skewed perceptions of gamers is a stereotype that has evolved and is cementing a social paradigm.

If an artist who spends 12 hours straight working on a piece is not considered an artist, why should a World of Warcraft player spending 12 hours playing be considered one? As much as they crave critical acclaim, artists, like gamers, do what they do for self-fulfillment, a sense of personal achievement.

As a writer, I may spend up to four hours working on a short story or newspaper article. Does that make me addicted to writing? I think not. This social double standard is one that tarnishes the gaming culture. It makes gamers like myself look socially awkward and ultimately strange people, just because we enjoy something that is widely accepted to be primarily for children, despite the fact that a survey conducted by the Entertainment Software Association says that 49 percent of gamers are aged 18-49, with the mean age being 35.

People must check the facts before making hasty generalizations about others.

GAMES BIASES

The apex of technology is nigh. The only problem I have with the task force is that it does not have a single member that belongs to the middle class. There’s no substitute for immediate interaction. Talking to Americans directly is not only crucial, but imperative for the task force’s success.

Middle-class Americans deserve to voice their issues

On Feb. 28, the first meeting of President Obama’s middle class task force took place in Philadelphia. The purpose of this task force is to meet in cities across the country to deal with problems faced by the average American.

The problem, according to an article from Time magazine, is that the task force does not have a single member that belongs to the middle class, which normally would be the case of a task force from Vice President Joe Biden to Council of Economic Advisors Chairwoman Christina Romer is part of the top 5 percent of wage earners. However, what this article fails to acknowledge is that the members of the task force from the Council of Economic Advisors chairwoman to the energy secretary are the ones most knowledgeable about ways to solve the problems faced by the middle class.

In order to help the middle class, the task force must have the most experience on issues concerning the economy and ways of using renewable energy to create green jobs. Since they are experienced within these fields, it should not surprise anyone that they belong to the top 5 percent of wage earners, especially since these experts are in high demand during a recession.

Besides the fact that the members of the task force should be the most knowledgeable in fields concerning job creation, middle class Americans can submit their questions and ideas online on the task force’s Web site, StrongMiddleClass.gov.

The only problem I have with the task force is that the whole point of going from city to city is to hear from middle class Americans to find out about the problems they are facing. The best way to increase consumer confidence in the middle class to hear from middle-class Americans at these sessions is to directly answer their questions and seriously consider their ideas and suggestions.

In the session conducted by the task force in Philadelphia, the task force did not accept any questions from the audience. Since these experts are going to have to do more discussion among themselves about what to do to help the middle class outside of these sessions, and any law they propose is going to have to be passed through Congress, the greatest benefit that can be achieved from such a session is to hear what the middle class has to say.

"I think that it is important for the middle class to hear Biden and other panelists person-
Humberto Hernandez used to hate public speaking. But after he became a part of Corps of Cadets, he’s able to speak to large groups without getting up “so much.”

Hernandez said his accomplishment is due to his involvement with Corps of Cadets, a student club that works in conjunction with Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corps at FIU. “I used to get nervous before. My palms would sweat and I couldn’t think straight,” said Hernandez, a civil engineer major and vice president of the club.

Students who join ROTC automatically become club members, according to Jorge Rossell, the club’s president. Rossell describes the club as a collaboration of big brothers. Members help each other with academic issues, personal issues and even career concerns.

“We build teamwork by bringing members together,” Rossell said.

During local football games and concerts, club members work by helping camera TV crews, making sure that no one disrupts the venue and also helping raise funds for the club and ROTC, according to Hernandez.

Teamwork is important during physical training when members swim carrying 40 pounds, jump off airplanes and perform land navigation with a compass.

“This program has helped me develop my leadership skills, my confidence and my interpersonal skills,” Hernandez said.

Members are encouraged but not expected to participate in physical training, which is scheduled three times a week in the early morning hours.

“If you see some guys in uniform running around campus at 6 a.m., that’s us,” Hernandez said.

Although the club gives its members the opportunity to network with people from all walks of life, the amount of time it takes from its members does not always allow for fun time.

“A lot of times you don’t get to party, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing,” Hernandez said. “We are more focused and career-oriented and we tend to prioritize what’s good, so not everything is about party and girls.”

For more information contact the FIU ROTC office at 305-448-1419.
**MAN, I FEEL LIKE A WOMAN**

**STRIKE A POSE:** Delta Lambda Phi - Beta Delta chapter, “national social fraternity for gay, bisexual and progressive men,” according to its Web site, puts on a show March 11 in GL 100.

**diversions**

**PHD: Piled Higher and Deeper** By Jorge Cham

EUNG THE PINEAPPLE!

**art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez**

The new U2 album is not bad. Released on Feb. 27, the Irish mega group’s 12th album, No Line on The Horizon, is probably an improvement on their last album. Looking past the awful first single (something you had to do with their last album), there are some really great songs on it.

The title track, “No Line on the Horizon” and “Cedars of Lebanon” are terrific. Many of the songs feature some of Bono’s finest lyrics in a long time, as he seems to be speaking directly to his band and the audience in songs like “Magnificent” and the brilliantly titled “I’ll Go Crazy If I Don’t Go Crazy Tonight.”

Having said all that, I don’t want it to sound like I’m heaping too much praise on it. Like I said, the album is decidedly not bad, but it’s certainly not much more than that.

However, you’d never know that by reading the majority of reviews for this album, which have widely hailed the album as a Masterpiece, with a capital “M.”

The past three U2 albums have really seen this type of knee jerk reaction from critics, especially those in the mainstream immediately heaping praise on it for not being terrible, apparently. Rolling Stone, which admitted probably stopped being relevant sometime during the last millennium, has hailed each of the last three U2 albums as a classic, with a capital “M.”

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**CHRIS TOWERS
COLUMN**

Why U2 album brings in wildly hailing reviews

Of course this is all subjective and in the interest of full disclosure, I’ve been accused of being a huge Paul McCartney apologist, and as such, may have been guilty of this crime with the release of McCartney’s 2005 album Chaos & Creation in the Backyard.

In the weeks following its release, I was quick to note the album as a stunning achievement from a supposedly washed up pop tune smith. But, as time went on, my interest in the album waned, and I realized that I was doing what I hated.

It is difficult to judge music in a vacuum, and that is what is being asked of critics when a historically great artist begins releasing albums in the twilight of their career.

You have to take the past and history of the artist into account, take these reviews with a grain of sand and enjoy them for what they are: a talented, though past its prime, artist who thankfully still has the drive to make music.

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**THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS**

**MIDAY • MARCH 23**

**WHAT: Pie Your Candidate**
**WHEN: 12 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC Chapman Plaza**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2121**

**WHAT: Students WRITE General Meeting**
**WHEN: 2 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 340**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2138**

**WHAT: Lambda Theta Pi Pool Tournament**
**WHEN: 6:30 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 305**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2285**

**TUESDAY • MARCH 24**

**WHAT: Preksha Meditation Club Meeting**
**WHEN: 2 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 305**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2128**

**WHAT: SPC General Meeting**
**WHEN: 3:30 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 305**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2138**

**WHAT: CSO General Meeting**
**WHEN: 3:30 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 140**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2285**

**WHAT: Haitian Students Organization**
**General Meeting**
**WHEN: 8 p.m.**
**WHERE: GC 305**
**CONTACT: 305-348-2285**

Compiled by Chris Towers
DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE. Hip-Hop, Top 40, Alternative. It doesn't matter what you listen to, tobacco companies just want you to think smoking sounds like a good idea. But smoking and using other forms of tobacco can lead to serious illnesses like emphysema and lung cancer that can tune you out – permanently.
Big Friday night for Rembisz

Staff ace completely shuts down team
Major improvements have come, can they be sustained?

In his four starts, Ebert has thrown 29 and one third innings and allowed just twenty base runners. He has struck out 36 while walking just 5, and has been overwhelming, striking out 9 in each start except for his latest 8 strikeout performance in a 7 inning complete game shutout over Farleigh Dickinson. The rest of the staff has combined for a 2.60 earned run average, a far cry from the 7.12 ERA last season’s team put up. The offense has been carried by slugging left hander Tyler Townsend, who leads the team with 4 home runs. The team has scored 124 runs, good for 6.8 runs per game. The Golden Panthers schedule, however, only gets tougher from here, so the team will need to see if their newfound pitching prowess can carry the team through conference play and into the postseason.

Chris Towers can be reached at Chris.towers@fiusm.com.

Weekend in Clearwater
ends with win over UCF

pitch which scored a run for FIU and kept the bases loaded for McClain who was walked, bringing senior Carolina Rojas home to give FIU a 4-1 advantage. UCF put another run on the board after Tenisha Dixon tripled to left field, however FIU responded in the next inning when Soberon stole home to put the Golden Panthers up 5-3. The Knights would go on to tie the game in the bottom of the seventh inning but would only be able to put up one more run in the extra inning while FIU got four hits and kicked in three more runs to grasp the win, 8-5.
BASEBALL DOUBLEHEADER

POWER SURGE

Three seven-inning starts push Panthers past Knights

SERGIO BONILLA
ANDREW JULIAN
Sports Directors

GAME ONE: FIU 15, FDU 7

With an eight-run second inning, FIU buried the Fairleigh Dickinson Knights (2-8) in the opening game of a day-night doubleheader, 15-7, on March 21 at University Park Stadium.

Corey Polizzano tossed seven innings for the Golden Panthers (13-4), and allowed just two earned runs to improve to 2-1 on the season.

FIU carried a 3-1 lead into the second inning, after two FDU errors led to two unearned runs that followed an RBI single by Tim Joe.

Matt Holsman drove in the second run for the Knights in the top of the second, and the Golden Panthers took charge in the second.

Capitalizing on an error, FIU plated four unearned runs in the inning.

Garrett Wiltse led off with a single, and Sean Reilly followed with a double. After Junior Arrojo walked to load the bases, Lammar Guy drew a base on balls and scored on a sacrifice fly. Tim Joe picked up his second RBI of the day with a single, after Steven Stropp was hit by a pitch.

The unearned runs followed, and after two FDU errors, the Knights plated four more runs and extended their lead to 11-2.

From there, Polizzano shined.

He allowed just one run in the second inning, tagging FIU reliever Justin Leith for the loss.

The junior southpaw from Southridge High School in Miami scattered eight hits total, walking two and striking out eight in seven innings.

Polizzano gave up another run in the fourth, but then clamped down, and retired the last 10 batters he faced.

The junior southpaw from Southridge High School in Miami scattered eight hits and struck out five.

The Knights were finally able to muster some consistent offense in the eighth inning, tagging FIU reliever Justin Leith with four earned runs on four hits and one walk in just 0.2 innings.

FIU has now won 13 of its first 17 games, and is having its best start since the team opened 13-4 in 2003 under Danny Price.

This game also marked the first five-game win streak for Turtle Thomas in his tenure at FIU.

GAME TWO: FIU 14, FDU 6

With a 14-4 record, this season for the Golden Panthers has been far more successful.

The turnaround has been anchored by absolutely dominant starting pitching, led by right-handed junior college transfers Tom Ebert and Scott Rembisz.

Rembisz, coming from Manatee Community College, has started four games with two wins and a complete game. Over 28 innings, he has struck out 25 while walking just two, holding opposing batters to a .206 average.

As good as opening day starter Rembisz was, he has been bested by the junior out of Fargo, North Dakota, Tom Ebert. Ebert, an imposing 6’6”, 255 pound figure on the mound, has been absolutely dominating, going 3-1 in

TERRIFIC TOM:

After striking out nine batters in each of his first three starts, Tom Ebert had to settle for just eight K’s in FIU’s 1:0-0 win in game two of a doubleheader vs. Fairleigh Dickinson. Ebert now posts a 7-to-1 strikeout to walk ratio.

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BASEBALL, page 10

When you recruit this well, who needs vets?

Most of the time, you want experience.

Most of the time, when you are going into a season, you want to ride players who have done it before.

Most of the time.

Returning only 11 players from a team that won just 20 of its 56 games may have been a blessing in disguise for Turtle Thomas.

Inheriting a roster mostly comprised of ex-head coach Danny Price’s players, Thomas’ first season was one to forget for the Golden Panthers.

But that team lost 22 players in the offseason, so Thomas, a tireless recruiter, took the opportunity to put together the nation’s 15th ranked recruiting class, based as much in its depth as its talent.

So far, through eighteen games and with a 14-4 record, this season for the Golden Panthers has been far more successful.

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TOWERS, page 11

SOLID WEEKEND:

Kasey Barrett was named to the all-tournament team at the U.SF Under Armour Showcase.

STEFANIE GABRIEL
Staff Writer

The FIU softball team traveled to Clearwater from March 13-15 to play in the USF Under Armour Showcase.

The team went 3-2 for the weekend, picking up wins against Long Island, George Washington and Indiana. Meanwhile, junior pitcher Kasey Barrett was the go-to pitcher; she threw two complete games and was named the All-Tournament Team pitcher for that weekend, striking out 20 with just one earned run.

The Golden Panthers continued on the road to play the No. 1 team in the country, University of Florida, in two games.

Even though FIU out-hit the Gators 7-4, they fell short and dropped the games, 3-2 and 5-0.

Success however did spring over the break for the Golden Panthers when they recorded 14 hits, which tied a season high, in extra innings to beat UCF in Orlando, 8-6, on March 17.

Barrett got the start and struck out seven batters, but freshman Jennifer Gniadek (6-6) would finish off the final two innings to earn the win; she struck out four and gave up just one run.

Backed behind the solid pitching staff, the offense was able to get on the board early on in the first inning as freshman Ashley McClain led off the game with a single followed by Kim Rodriguez who doubled in the first run.

UCF starter Kristina DeMello threw a wild pitch in the top of the third inning to score Rodriguez from third base and give FIU a 2-0 lead.

The Knights would change pitchers in the following inning, but it didn’t matter.

Lisa Brooks knocked down a bunted base hit after a walk and an error to load the bases for the Golden Panthers.

Sophomore Iriseldis Soberon was then hit by a