Medical school speculated to stimulate local economy

ELISE PUGI Staff Writer

A new study commissioned by FIU shows that the new College of Medicine will have a large impact on the local economy by creating more than 60,000 jobs and generating more than $8.9 billion in a span of 16 years.

This is according to a recent study by Trippe Umbach, a firm that specializes in assessing the economic impact of medical centers.

“Having two medical schools in South Florida increases the multiplier effect of the impact on the local economy,” said Thomas Breslin, chair of the Faculty Senate and professor of international relations, who had the initial idea of bringing a medical school to the University.

The Academic Health Sciences Center is the building complex that will house the College of Medicine, Florida Department of Health, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, an ambulatory care center and other health related programs.

As the new breeding ground for a recession-proof health sector, the medical school, which is set to open in August, has already created an annual economic impact of more than $100 million in the local economy and has helped create approximately 100 jobs, most of which are high-paying professional positions.

“This medical school is the kind of long term, sustainable economic engine South Florida needs at a time when jobs are disappearing daily,” said President Modesto Maidique in a recent statement.

MODESTO A. MAIDIQUE FIU, president

Maidique is awaiting an approval from state legislators for an additional $11 million for the medical school.

Apart from creating jobs, the medical school will stimulate the local economy by increasing local and state sales tax revenue and hiring local construction companies. According to the Umbach study, the school will also greatly expand the biomedical industry to $5.7 billion annually by 2025.

The new AHSC will return nearly $12 to the state in both direct and indirect tax revenue for every $1 invested.

MED SCHOOL, page 2

ATHLETICS, page 12

Athletics feels effects of massive budget cuts

CHARLIE GRAU Senior Staff Writer

Public and private universities have seen their budgets shrink over the past year and collegiate athletics isn’t being spared.

On March 24, the Athletics Department announced it was cutting $1 million from its operating budget when the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

The budget for next year will be approximately $22 million.

“We’ve been able to avoid this for a year and a half, and now it’s time for Athletics to make some cuts,” said Athletic Director Pete Garcia. “Times are difficult all over, but we are not going to use this as an excuse.”

In order to trim the budget, Garcia said there would be layoffs and cuts within the department.

“This is a process where we are going to analyze everything and figure out from our staff and senior staff where the layoffs need to come from,” Garcia said.

No sports are going to be cut and Garcia said academic support and compliance will not be affected.

“We’re in business to educate our young men and women and our No. 1 priority is to be in compliance with all NCAA rules and regulations,” Garcia said. “We have a process of studying and analyzing every option to make sure that our student athletes are not adversely affected. It’s still our responsibility to make sure that our student athletes have all the resources they need to be successful on the field and in the classroom.”

Garcia insisted that cuts would not affect phase two of FIU Football Stadium, the fieldhouse, and said it is on schedule and will be completed July 1.

Athletics has been able to avoid budget cuts because it has seen new streams of revenue from the football stadium, ticket sales, concession sales, sponsorships and athletic fee increases in 2007 and 2008.

But with the economy slipping, businesses and consumers are spending less and it’s affecting
Black union seeks place in council

Our organization would seek to unite organizations like the … Pan-African Organization, hopefully from both campuses, to be represented under this one banner.

Bruno Phanord
SGA Student Services, chairperson

A future meeting between CSO, the SGA executive branch and the new council would need to be held to determine whether to move related organizations under the new council. These organizations represent different interests in the student body. Governing councils in SGA currently include Panther Rage and CSO. Among the responsibilities of the new governing council would be to fund organizations that would be directly under them, with funding coming directly from SGA, attending executive branch meetings of SGA and reporting directly to SGA. While also hosting a publishing a lecture series in the same vein as CSO.

---

School revenue to benefit Sweetwater

In the ongoing operations of the FIU College of Medicine, we will also greatly contribute to health care cost savings in the local community through the Neighborhood Help program, which is designed to help families in underserved communities.

According to the study, the pioneering program will give underprivileged families in South Florida access to education and preventive health care and save South Florida taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs by 2020.

The AHSC, which will stand in the northeast corner of University Park campus across the street from the City of Sweetwater, will help forge a mutually beneficial partnership between the University and Sweetwater.

“In the hope of turning the City of Sweetwater into a college town, we are going to accommodate for the young Health professionals, and students who will be coming to the new College of Medicine, said Manuel M. Maroto, mayor of Sweetwater.

Sweetwater looks to piggy back off the projected stimulus of the medical school, developing retail and business centers, condos, medical offices, coming outside Miami-Dade local economy.”

The economic prospects of Sweetwater will benefit by the increase in licensing fees of the new business that will eventually be spinning up.

“For at least 10 years, the City of Sweetwater had been trying to reinvent itself to accommodate the growth of the school,” Breslin said.

“Essentially, the medical school will be a shot in the arm for the housing market here, by boosting revenue flow to the local economy.”

Aside from the students coming outside Miami-Dade County, the College of Medicine will hire specialists in the fields and with unusual and challenging complications cannot get treatment elsewhere, those patients will come to the hospital, Breslin explained.

“In 30 years, FIU will be the UCLA of the East Coast,” Breslin said, alluding to UCLA’s medical center which is ranked in the top three hospitals in the United States.

---

Correction

On the March 23 article titled, “Funes unanimously elected as new election commissioner,” it was stated that SGC-UP Chief Justice Leonel Goenaga said that SGC was an “arcane” title to refer to the Senate. Goenaga actually said that the term was “archaic.”

In that same article it was stated that Section 2 Part B of the SGC-UP Elections Code was being discussed, the actual article being debated was Section 2 Part E.

In the article titled, “New policy eases travel to Cuba,” published March 27, it is incorrectly stated that Giacarlo Sopo worked on Obama’s campaign.

In the same article, it is written that Uva Aragon “sees having more accurate polls and elections.”

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-7209 or BBC at 305-919-4722.
**News literacy class aims to correct poor research habits**

**CHERYL MALONE Staff Writer**

Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications, Frederick Blevens, will teach an innovative course in the Honors College based on news literacy. News Literacy: Building Community Through Digital Media, will be offered to third and fourth-year students within the Honors College starting this fall semester at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“The idea is to train people how to consume the media,” said Blevens. “With the bombardment of information, news and so-called ‘news and liability level’ is pretty weak.”

Blevens designed the course syllabus after having observed the pioneering of the course at the University of New York and Stony Brook, where the same concept of news literacy has been taught successfully for four years.

“I came up with the phrase ‘practice safe news.’ It reminds me of a meat market on the Web with really contaminated stuff out there – you can get infected, not your computer – I mean your brain can get infected with all the stuff out there that’s not credible,” Blevens said.

According to Blevens’ syllabus, the course includes both Fall and Spring semester requirements going hand-in-hand with each other, as both are necessary for the success of the student.

Interim dean for the Honors College, Lesley Northrop, explained the layout of the Honors College’s yearly design.

The first and second years in the Honors College are based on team-structured classes, while the third and fourth become more flexible for students, with more

“The faculty pays to provide honors students with a particular kind of course,” Northrop said. “We must have a topic with a variety of disciplines.

The news literacy class will offer an understanding of journalistic principles, and the importance of journalism in America, and will allow for experience in the field alongside the community students a better understanding of how we receive the information,” she said.

But news awareness is only the first half of Blevens’ design. The material covered in the Fall will contribute to the second half of the class, which will be fulfilled in the Spring through interaction with a chosen community.

“The Internet has really negatively impacted two important pillars of society: news media and libraries,” Blevens said.

In order to unite the two together, Blevens intends to bring the students to a community, working through a public library, while properly accessing media to the public. It will depend on library space and computer access to properly give training or classes to the public.

The end goal is to successfully build a sustainable network of community media, helping the new age of information gathering, according to the course syllabus.

Although Blevens designed the syllabus, he intends to have student interaction and fieldwork with the community.

It is under this intensely student-oriented project that the course remains, with further design chosen by the course students.

“The advantages of this is that the people who learn news literacy will become, probably, dedicated news users – which means they are customers of journalism,” Blevens said.
Free massage, yoga classes offered

LORENA ESTRADA
Staff Writer

The Wellness Center offers free yoga classes and massage therapy to students who want to relieve some stress and relax at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

As part of University Health Services, which provides professional, accessible and cost-effective primary care services to registered students at FIU, students have the option to attend a one-and-a-half hour yoga class with yoga instructor Bonnie Quiceno. Students can also receive a 10-15 minute massage session for physical and mental relaxation, where licensed massage therapist Shari Little provides a “healing touch” to students at no cost.

“Massage therapy is the best thing for students because of the tension that builds up from the stress of studying and the long hours of sitting at a desk,” said Little. “I target areas such as shoulders, neck and back to relieve and help prevent knots.”

Whether it’s to relax for a while in between classes or relieve some stress, students like Ulises Guerrero, a junior political science major who works at the Fitness Center, have taken advantage of the opportunity offered on campus.

“I’ve gone to get a massage in between classes several times. It’s great to get a free massage to release some tension during these [hard] economic times,” Guerrero said.

Little has been working at BBC since massage therapy became available to students in 2004. Throughout the years, she’s dedicated her time to helping students relieve stress, forming a consistent clientele.

“So far, I have students that have been coming to me every Wednesday for the last three years,” she said. “They haven’t missed a week.”

Because the center has been overwhelmed with students seeking massage therapy, students have been limited to one massage per week, according to Donna Walcott, assistant director of the Wellness Center.

“We want to give everyone an opportunity to attend,” she said.

Ten-minute massages are available on Mondays at the Fitness Center from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Fifteen-minute massages are available on Wednesdays at the Wellness Center from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and are by appointment only.

“She can only fit so many people between those two hours of the day,” Walcott said.

For those students who feel that 10-15 minutes just isn’t long enough, Little also offers a full-hour massage for $30.

“You can’t find anything better than that,” said Little, who noted that the price range of a one-hour massage is typically between $75 to $100.

Little also emphasized the importance of stretching when it comes to lowering one’s level of stress. Students who regularly work out at the Fitness Center or that are interested in releasing stress while burning calories at the same time, can take advantage of the free yoga classes offered.

Christie Ma inhibo, a junior journalism major, recently found out about the free yoga classes and said she plans to attend next week’s classes.

“I used to go to yoga at least three times a week last year, but I stopped because of my school and work schedule,” said Ma inhibo. “But now that I know they’re available to us here on campus for free, I’m so excited to start again.”

Yoga consists of a dynamic flowing sequence of postures that link breathing and movement. The practice begins with a warmup of all major muscles and joints, and then moves into more challenging, long-held postures that build core strength, endurance and flexibility.

Free yoga classes and massage therapy are included in students’ health fees and are co-sponsored by University Health Services and Biscayne Bay Recreation.

Yoga classes are available on Mondays from 3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

To set up an appointment for a free massage session, students can contact the Wellness Center at (305) 919-5307. Students interested in a full-hour massage therapy can personally contact Sherry Little at (305) 302-1091.

FIU student publishes sci-fi book, aims for full series

IVAN FLORES
Contributing Writer

Jason Macumber, a Sarasota, Fla. native and senior political science major has just published his first book, Ob scure Origins, March 19.

“Obscure Origins is a science fiction tale for young adults. It’s sci-fi because it is based around the Roswell mythology,” said Macumber, referring to a Roswell, N.M. UFO sighting. “This story stands out because there isn’t really any young adult sci-fi, it all leans toward romance,” Macumber said.

After reading the Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer, he decided to write his own coming-of-age story about letting go of the past and overcoming the future.

“I enjoyed the strength of the storytelling [in Twilight] so I wanted to see if I could write something like that,” Macumber said.

The novel is about Rion Hart, a young man who discovers his life is a fabrication. Part of a secret government project, Rion is injected with alien DNA, and has lived his life as part of a virtual reality simulation.

The images that he thought were his life were actually a computer generated program. The book was published by PublishAmerica and Macumber said the process was anything but easy.

“I sent query letters to 165 agents and publishers. I received 80 rejections, 10 responses, five asking for the first three chapters and five requesting the whole manuscript,” said Macumber. “It’s a really hard business to break into, you don’t really realize it until you dive into it.”

There are times when my energy is drained... You wonder if there is even a point. If anyone will read it or will be interested... Jason Macumber, senior political science major

Macumber has been writing consistently for the past six or seven years, but writing has been a part of his life since elementary school.

According to him, he struggled a lot because the people around him didn’t understand what it means to write a book.

“(People) think the writer is in control. In reality the characters are in control. I wanted it to move in one direction, but my characters moved me somewhere else,” Macumber said.

He also said that balancing school, work and the writing of his book was a challenge.

“There are times when my energy is drained. I pour myself into the book and I don’t think I can do this because of school, work and life,” said Macumber. “You wonder if there is even a point. If anyone will read it or will be interested in the story.”

Macumber hopes that his novel will become as popular as the Twilight series, and he is currently planning a book tour during the summer.

Macumber’s intentions include making Obscure Origins into a series, and is currently looking for a publisher. For more information visit www.publishamerica.com/obscureorigins or www.jasonmacumber.com.

BOOK, page 5
‘Be Hip Be Fit Series’ aims to address healthy eating

NATALYA COHEN
Contributing Writer

Students went to the Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation Center on March 26 to eat chocolate brownie bars.

The brownies were to promote ‘Be Hip Be Fit Series,’ a program she coordinated to inform students about the different ways of living a healthier lifestyle.

Her inspiration came from the Wellness Center. “I walked around campus and got to know more of the students. Honestly, the students were most helpful in the process and were determined to offer their assistance. That was amazing,” Nusrath said.

The Wellness Center sponsored Nusrath’s mission and printed the posters to promote the event.

Elias Bardawil, director of Campus Recreation and Warren Shaw, assistant director of Campus Recreation, suggested Nusrath use the Rec Center to host the event. Nusrath decided to offer an internship at the Recreation Center and I felt that it was finally the time for me to give, in the most constructive way, to the school. I feel like I’m giving something back not only to the school, but to the students,” Nusrath said.

Ronacha Azard, senior health science major and Enidra Porter, junior nursing major, helped Nusrath give away flyers and free evaluations.

Students also received brochures with portion control tips, meal plan methods, free pins from the recreational facility and nutrition assessment forms.

The forms asked students details about their lifestyle, such as the amount of water consumed per day, number of fruit and vegetable servings per day, snacks consumed on a regular basis, amount of carbonated beverages consumed per day and amount of exercise and nutrition goals. Students were also asked their age and height.

Porter and Azard also tested students’ fat percentage with a body mass index calculator to determine whether students were fit, average, underweight or overweight.

Free food and pamphlets were funded by the Recreation Center.

Among the students signing up was Carl Derek Boniface, a fitness center member whose wife, Ashley Boniface, is an event management major.

He was not happy about his weight. “I have got to lose a little,” Boniface said.

Others, however, were not too keen on stepping onto the scale.

“I haven’t worked out in a while,” said Angela Thomas, a nutrition science major junior, while measuring her body mass index.

He was not happy about his weight. “I haven’t worked out in a while,” said Angela Thomas, a hospitality graduate student.

Students were also asked their age and height.

Porter and Azard also tested students’ fat percentage with a body mass index calculator to determine whether students were fit, average, underweight or overweight.

Free food and pamphlets were funded by the Recreation Center.

Among the students signing up was Carl Derek Boniface, a fitness center member whose wife, Ashley Boniface, is an event management major.

He was not happy about his weight. “I have got to lose a little,” Boniface said.

Others, however, were not too keen on stepping onto the scale.

“I haven’t worked out in a while,” said Angela Thomas, a hospitality graduate student.

HEALTHY MEASURES: (Top) Noor Nusrath (center), intern in the Rec Center at BBC, helps Denesa Atra King (left), hospitality management junior, and Vivianne Medina (right), hospitality management junior, measure their body mass index with the BMI calculator. (Left) Enidra Porter, nursing major junior, adjusts the scale for Carl Derek Boniface, fitness center member and non-FIU student, at the ‘Be Hip Be Fit Series’ outside the Wellness Center.

Exclusive AT&T benefits are a slam dunk:
• Unlimited Wi-Fi use at thousands of AT&T Hotspots*
• Unlimited Mobile to Mobile calling to over 77 million AT&T customers
• Unlimited Facebook® for BlackBerry® smartphones**
• Five free song downloads with Napster Mobile® signup***

Hurry! Bring your student ID to an AT&T store today and mention FAN # 2396090

Get in the game
with special savings on BlackBerry® smartphones from AT&T!

Available at:
8279 W. Flagler St., Miami, FL 33144 - (305) 261-1338
10003 NW 45th St, Miami, FL 33178 - (786) 845-0066

*Wi-Fi included with a BlackBerry® service plan for use with a BlackBerry® Bold™ smartphone.
** Facebook® for BlackBerry® and Napster Mobile® require a BlackBerry® Personal data plan.
*** Coverage not available in all areas and may vary on service type, device and rate plan. For complete terms and conditions, see Data Rate Plan brochure.

5% monthly service discount on qualified wireless plans. Ask an AT&T representative how you can earn money back for your old wireless phone when you buy a new BlackBerry® smartphone from AT&T!
RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

- **SHOULD IMPORTANT STUDENT ISSUES BE AGENDAED DURING SGC BID NIGHTS?**
  - Many students believe that important issues should be agendaed during SGC Bid Nights, which are crucial events for students to engage in the decision-making process.
  - This practice ensures that student voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

- **SHOULD THE SGC OR THE UP BE IN CHARGE OF STUDENT TRANSPORTATION?**
  - There is debate on whether the SGC or the UP should be in charge of student transportation.
  - Some students believe that the SGC should handle this responsibility, as it directly relates to student needs and should be under student control.
  - Others argue that the UP should manage transportation services to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ADVICE SERVICES?**
  - There is a strong call for the SGC to focus on student advice services, which can provide guidance and support to students at various stages of their academic and personal journeys.
  - This focus can help students navigate the challenges they face and make informed decisions.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ADVOCACY?**
  - Students urge the SGC to prioritize student advocacy, which involves addressing systemic issues and advocating for policy changes that impact students.
  - This focus can help students address and mitigate the effects of systemic issues.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS?**
  - There is a need for the SGC to collaborate more closely with student organizations to support their growth and development.
  - This collaboration can enhance the student experience and ensure that student organizations have the resources they need.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT?**
  - Student engagement is critical for fostering a sense of community and ensuring that students are actively involved in campus life.
  - The SGC should prioritize initiatives that increase student engagement and foster a supportive environment.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT FUNDING?**
  - Funding is a core concern for students, and the SGC should work to secure adequate financial resources to support student initiatives and programs.
  - This focus can help students access the resources they need to succeed academically and personally.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT HOUSING?**
  - Student housing is a significant concern for many students, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to address housing needs.
  - This focus can help students find affordable and safe housing options.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH?**
  - Mental health is an important issue that the SGC should address through various initiatives.
  - This focus can help students access the support they need to maintain their well-being.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT OFFICE EFFICIENCY?**
  - Improving the efficiency of student offices can help students access the services they need in a timely and effective manner.
  - This focus can enhance the student experience and ensure that students receive the support they require.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT PRIVACY?**
  - Privacy is a critical concern for students, and the SGC should work to protect student data and ensure confidentiality.
  - This focus can help students feel secure and valued.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT SECURITY?**
  - Security is a top priority for many students, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to ensure a safe campus environment.
  - This focus can help students feel secure and protected.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES?**
  - Health services are essential for students' well-being, and the SGC should ensure that these services are accessible and effective.
  - This focus can help students access the health services they need.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT SPORTS?**
  - Sports are a significant part of many students' lives, and the SGC should support athletic programs to enhance the student experience.
  - This focus can help students stay active and healthy.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES?**
  - Economic opportunities are crucial for students, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support student employment and internships.
  - This focus can help students gain valuable work experience.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING RESOURCES?**
  - Learning resources are essential for academic success, and the SGC should ensure that students have access to the resources they need.
  - This focus can help students excel academically.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT TRAVEL?**
  - Travel is an important aspect of the student experience, and the SGC should support student travel initiatives.
  - This focus can help students explore the world and gain new experiences.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING?**
  - Service learning is a valuable educational experience, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support this type of learning.
  - This focus can help students gain valuable skills.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM?**
  - Volunteerism is a significant part of many students' lives, and the SGC should support student volunteer initiatives.
  - This focus can help students serve their communities.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?**
  - Diversity and inclusion are critical for a healthy campus environment, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support these values.
  - This focus can help students feel included and valued.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT CULTURAL EXPERIENCES?**
  - Cultural experiences are essential for personal growth and development, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote cultural understanding.
  - This focus can help students explore different cultures.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY?**
  - Gender and sexual identity are crucial concerns for many students, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote equality and respect.
  - This focus can help students feel safe and supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?**
  - Health and well-being are essential for a healthy campus environment, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY?**
  - Spirituality and religious identity are significant aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?**
  - Physical health and well-being are essential for a healthy campus environment, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?**
  - Mental health and well-being are crucial concerns for many students, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT LIVING AND LEARNING?**
  - Living and learning are essential aspects of the student experience, and the SGC should support initiatives that enhance these experiences.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS AND RESOURCES?**
  - Accommodations and resources are crucial for students, and the SGC should prioritize initiatives to support these needs.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?**
  - Community engagement is a significant aspect of the student experience, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote community involvement.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT CREATIVITY AND ART?**
  - Creativity and art are essential aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT YOUTH AND RECREATION?**
  - Youth and recreation are significant aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM?**
  - Service and volunteerism are crucial aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS?**
  - Collaboration and partnerships are essential aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?**
  - Civic engagement is a significant aspect of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY?**
  - Innovation and technology are crucial aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.

- **SHOULD THE SGC FOCUS ON STUDENT INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY?**
  - Inclusion and diversity are essential aspects of many students' lives, and the SGC should support initiatives that promote these values.
  - This focus can help students feel supported.
**FIU out of bounds in banning P2P**

**MATTHEW RUCKMAN**

Staff Writer

On March 21, the University of Miami announced that all peer-to-peer file sharing would cease on campus, including all wireless and home networks.

The University's intent is obvious: to deter illegal downloading by restricting students' access to the Internet.

The notification e-mail stated, “There has been a dramatic increase in the amount of copyright violation activities performed on campus within recent months.

It's not a university's place to prosecute or preemp a gray area of the law.

“These violations involve illega lly downloading music, movies and other copyrighted material through the FIU network. In an effort to curb these illegal activi ties at the University, FIU will no longer allow peer-to-peer file sharing.”

If this goes unimpeded, this will come as a shock.

The restricting of access to content and information was prob ably never one of the Univer si ty's ays, yet this is what it is doing.

What action this shows is who the University will side with when money is involved.

Not the obvious choice the students - but instead the Recording Industry Association of America in policing our personal lives.

The RIAA is the trade group that is responsible for most lawsuits concerning the illegal downloading of music.

The ban seems to be a bit absurd by itself, it ignores the murkiness of the legality of downloading.

But because theft occurs does not mean the University should deny an important avenue to the Internet.

Cars are stolen on campus all the time after all – this doesn’t mean you ban motor-vehicles within its boundaries.

What is also worrisome is how FIU is taking on the role of enforcer, a role I never expected of a public education institution.

It’s not a university’s place to prosecute or preempt a gray area of the law.

Many schools in fact do the opposite of what FIU is doing and try to protect their students, as would seem fitting.

Purdue University, for example, has its own P2P server that shields its student’s identities from the litigious RIAA. Purdue merely imposes a cap on downloads in order to curb bandwidth costs.

This solution would seem preferable to the outright banning of a very important and efficient means of communication. It makes one wonder why this particular route was taken given the alternatives.

The only reason I can think of is the very blatant act of bowing down to the RIAA.

In the future I would hope the University defers to students’ interest.

The restricting of our access to the Internet should never be scope of education.

Teaching is about the libera tion, not confinement, of information and content.

**Study shows U.S. becoming less of a Christian nation**

**MOHAMED ABDBHAKIM**

Contributing Writer

There’s a common misconception when it comes to the founding of our country - the United States. The mistake, the “myth,” is that this country was founded as a Christian one.

This is simply false and can be supported as such by the many most influential and crucial documents in world history, the Declaration of Independence. In this document, there is a clear point stressed toward the side of religious ambiguity.

At the time, the Christian establishment was heavily criticized even by some of the most influential figures of the declaration. Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were good examples, going as far as citing the church as the “lowest grade of ignorance of which their civil as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purposes.”

Despite our country being founded under such religious ambiguity, the United States still seems to be seen as a Christian country.

There is not much fault in this assumption, as more than 75 percent of Americans claim to be Christians, according to a recent survey. The question now mining upon many is whether the United States has in fact become less Christian.

**Science cannot be the enemy of Christianity.**

In fact, Christianity needs to work together with the sciences to make sure we advance as a people.

Amita Damis, freeway psychology major

**Fading Faith?**

**ANDREW ZAMORA**

Contributing Writer

When the Puritans first landed in Massachusetts they brought with them a powerful sense of faith, work ethic and morality.

More than 300 years later, America has grown to be one of the most prosperous and industrialized nations in the world. However, has this success come at the price of our old Christian values and faith? Has America become less Christian?

According to the American Religious Identification Survey conducted by Trinity College, 75 percent of Americans call themselves Christian – a sharp decrease from the 86 percent reported 20 years earlier. William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, believes this is due to a “shift toward individualism over the past quarter-century.”

People are not calling themselves Christian as much today as they did before and church attendance is declining, especially in the 21-45 age group (down to 52 percent from 33 percent in the 1970s, according to W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia). I believe that superficially our country may not be flying the same colors, but Christian ideals and views are still very prominent within our society.

Our society thrives on a strong moral code. We believe in a sense of justice and retribution, and we expect wrongs to be punished.

Good and evil are still faces of our lives. Our enemies, such as the radical Muslims we face today in the War on Terror, are portrayed not only as enemies of the United States but as enemies of God.

Our leaders, those who are taught the 10 commandments and millions of Americans go to work every morning guided by a strong work ethic.

There are still some, especially those better off, that hold fast to Calvinistic ideals. These individuals serve those with more material wealth as being better than others and see the poor, the homeless and the sick as deserving the position they are in.

They say to themselves, “I worked hard to get to where I am today, why should I help them? They’re there for a reason, most likely because they want to be.

If they really want to get themselves out they can, just as I did.”

Yet we expect others to help us because it is the “right thing to do.” Americans still love to talk about the American Dream, an idea based on Puritan work ethic. The idea that you reap what you sow is a metaphor found in the Bible itself. Galatians 6:7 states, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

So perhaps we are superficially moving toward secularity. However, America still has its Christian roots buried in its subconscious. I was raised a Roman Cath olic and was baptized, had my first Communion and was confirmed. However, I realized that there were certain facets of the Christian faith with which I did not agree and I stopped practicing. Yet even to this day I still catch myself thinking in the way I was raised and believe.

These teachings, since they are impressed on us at an early age and through the actions of the people around us, are very difficult to remove from thought. On top of that, we live in a society that inadvertently rewards behaviors associated with these ingrained beliefs and modes of thought.

So yes, superficially science and technology have continued their growth, and our great country moves closer to the science fiction future of our dreams. But the Christian heart of America still beats strong, only it has shifted in location from America’s chest to its subconscious.

**America still holds Christian values**

**MATTHEW RUCKMAN**

Staff Writer

Despite our country being founded under such religious ambiguity, the United States still seems to be seen as a Christian country.

There is not much fault in this assumption, as more than 75 percent of Americans claim to be Christians, according to a recent survey. The question now mining upon many is whether the United States has in fact become less Christian.

**My answer? A resounding yes.**

In the Bush administration, several sensitive issues (more notably that of abortion) have been handled with Christ-embodied safety gloves.

Many issues were brought almost immediately to a religious focus, often times diluting both sides of the argument.

One. Even in the first 60 days of our 44th president’s first term, there are small signs of a solid separation between church and state. A few weeks ago, President Obama announced his support for the advancement of stem cell research and ended tight federal restrictions on the matter. This is just a single example of how our country is diverting itself from its supposed Christian roots.

Catholics remain the largest religious group in this country, gaining 11 million followers since 1986. Even at such a rate of growth, the Catholic share of the U.S. population falls just short of 25 percent. The rest fall all along the religious spectrum, claiming anywhere from unorthodox Christians, to Muslims, Buddhists and Jews (with many dissociating themselves with religion altogether).

Science is what many Christians consider the lone titll rival of the religion.

“Science cannot be the enemy of Christianity. In fact, Christianity needs to work together with the sciences to make sure we advance as a people,” said Annika Dennis, a freshman majoring in psychology.

History teacher Andre Olson at Nur ul-Islam Academy added, “Popular belief supports the struggle between faith and fact. This just will not work. The problem is that the two affect each other greatly.”

Indeed, America has been undergoing a shift away from the Christian values it was thought to have been found under. As the trends in government and the overall attitude of American society toward organized religion shift in an opposing direction, the United States is probably going to keep facing the dawning aspect of a much “less Christian” country.
The Decemberists dish out first ‘concept album’

Well, Colin Meloy finally did what he’s been threatening to do for four albums.

On their latest album, The Hazards of Love, The Decemberists have put it all together musically and thematically for their first true “concept album.”

Through The Decemberists’ first four albums, Meloy’s overly verbose and prog-inspired folk songs conjured images of Jethro Tull and Tommy, especially on 2006’s The Crane Wife’s two epic song suites.

Meloy has always had a knack for telling stories, and the band behind him has really turned into an impressive rock outfit that knows how to follow these stories and change their mood and atmosphere.

While The Crane Wife seemed to, at times, reach for some of the thematic elements that Hazards has, no more than a handful of the songs were really related to each other.

Hazards of Love, on the other hand is an exquisitely crafted suite that connects musically from beginning to end, with thematic elements cropping up throughout the length of the album.

I’ve been told there is even some sort of a story about ghost children and a shape-shifting forest dweller who impregnates a princess, or something along those lines, but in all

DECEMBERISTS, page 10

Vive la France

French Club offers international taste to students

MONICA PUERTO

If a businessman or student from Miami is abroad in France, he will certainly need to know the daily routine and social customs of the French and be able to think on their terms rather than his own.

“A key advantage of speaking French is that I can travel to various countries in the world – African countries, Canada, etc. – and be able to communicate with them,” said Adrian Dourzmanian, a freshman and native Frenchman.

But for those who were neither raised in France nor speak the language, gaining that knowledge does not require a trip overseas.

“Our club offers the chance to experience a bit of France in Miami,” said Barbara Telleria, secretary of the Le Cercle Francais.

Le Cercle Francais, FIU’s French Club, was started approximately 15 years ago by the club’s advisor, Maria Garcia, and a few members that shared a passion for French culture and language.

When asked to be the club advisor, French instructor Garcia said, “I accepted to do this job everyday of the year with all my heart.”

Even though meetings are once a month, Le Cercle Francais does not stop expanding its knowledge and feeding its love for French culture.

Last week, the club and Pi Delta Phi, the French Honor Society, conducted a French awareness day, where brie and madeline cookies were served.

The event included discussions on French literature, movies and culture.

The club has already held two film festivals this semester: French Classics, with six modern films and Cinéma Franco-Libanais, which showed four contemporary French/Arabic films.

The club has also had a guided tour in French of the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami and is looking forward to their next tour on April 11, which will consist of brunch and a visit to an art exhibit in the Alliance Francaise.

Le Cercle Francais

“Lear passion does not end there,”

The club also conducts reading groups. So far, they’ve had six meetings this semester: three for beginners/intermediate and three for advanced. In order for these events to happen, the club raises funds by having a CrêpeMaker event, where they make and sell crêpes.

Club members are not required to speak the language or to be enrolled in any French courses. There are also no club fees.

“Being an integral part of a university that has the word “international” in its title, Le Cercle Francais takes the initiative to demonstrate to the FIU community not only the culture of France but also how expansive the French language is throughout the world,” Telleria said.

The club meetings are generally located in the Graham Center and times vary each month. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2 in GC 241 at 3:30 p.m. For more information on upcoming events, write to fiufrclub@gmail.com.

PhD: Piled higher and deeper
I get into arguments with people all the time about music, and while at times it can be infuriating, hip-hop is so subjective that even the most farcical statement is made regularly. I have heard dudes recently say things like, “Big L is not that good,” or “Jay-Z is overrated.” And the list goes on, because it is inevitable that people make the most ridiculous opinions and stick by them.

All of those statements are tolerable to an extent, because at some point you just don’t argue with people when they won’t listen. People have favorite rappers and opinions that I accept and cannot change, but there is something to be said about what the most efficient way to rate these artists is.

The most popular discussion that comes up though, are the comparisons between rappers. You cannot escape it, but at least it can be agreed what guidelines should be considered when determining who is “better.”

First of all, the artists’ body of work has to be looked at, and by that I mean the quality of their albums. Mix tapes can get you some credit, but an album is the body of work that determines your consistency to make good albums. Give me a good album, not four hot songs and trash. When you talk about pure talent, somebody will give you a chance and some beats to make a good album.

Freestyles on YouTube are a demonstration of raw talent, but that doesn’t put them among the best. It puts them among the best at freestyling in public, but not among the best hip-hop artists in the world.

The one topic I discussed with a few people was the random comparison of Lupe Fiasco and Jadakiss. It came up when I was playing basketball (where a lot of great dialogue happens about rap). Jada and Lupe are different, but it just came up when I was talking about how transcendent Lupe is.

You know what side I was on, and although I had some support, I was getting pummeled by Jadakiss fans who thought it wasn’t real. But all their support was about how good Jadakiss is, but even they admitted that the caliber of his albums were not on Lupe’s level.

Their support was just based on songs here and there. Jadakiss is very good, OK, but in basketball terms, he doesn’t have the rings. Jadakiss may be Vince Carter, but Lupe is Dwyane Wade.

The talent is very close, but more substance has been produced by the winner. Wade has a ring. Lupe has a classic album, almost inarguably (See Food & Liquor). Jadakiss has a couple dozen hot tracks, but what are his albums worth?

This is not meant to be a shot at Jada, because I do respect his skills. But mixtapes are the scrimmage. Albums are the season, and awards are the rings. If your album is good, you’re a playoff team, but if it is the best album, it’s a ring, or a championship. And I don’t mean the Grammys. I mean the consensus by hip-hop’s most knowledgeable people on a classic album.

When you’re speaking of who the best is at something, you have to weigh their accomplishments on the biggest platform.

“Moment of Clarity” examines the state of hip-hop every other Monday.

**Melody colors ‘Hazard’s of Love’ with steel guitars, mandolins**

Decemberists, page 9

honesty, I don’t bear the details.

The album format by design has to limit storytelling, as even the most well-crafted of musical theater requires some amount of dialogue to move the story along.

Much like The Who’s Tommy, it’s obvious even on first listen that there is some sort of story here, even if it is so obscure that it requires weeks of listening to really derive.

Still, the album works extremely well for what it is, with numerous discernable characters and guest vocalists (My Morning Jacket’s Jim James is listed in the credits, but I cannot for the life of me pinpoint him in the album).

Musically, the album expands on the prog influence that really came to the forefront on The Crane Wife, featuring a number of layers to the instruments and various tempo changes throughout individual songs.

“A Rover Scene” and “Won’t Want for Love” are among the heaviest songs The Decemberists have ever done, with a big low end, distorted guitars and loud plodding drums.

Elsewhere, the more folky sound of their earlier albums is built upon with new instruments to their canon, from pedal steel guitar to mandolin, and on “Isn’t It A Lovely Night” an accordion. The strength of the album as a song suite serves somewhat to hamper the individual strength of the songs, as often the songs veer off course in order to bring back thematic elements earlier introduced.

Still, songs like the sprawling epic centerpiece “The Wanting Comes in Waves/Repud” which features strong vocals from Lavender Diamond’s Becky Stark, manage to stand alone while still working within the context of the suite.

This is a strong album overall, though the nature of it takes a few listeners for the individual songs and melodies, which can match up to some of the best in The Decemberists’ catalog, to really sink in.

Patience is rewarded, because after a few listeners and the overwhelming feeling of trying to take it all in at once is gone, you really start to appreciate the intricacies of the melodies and the wit in the lyrics.

Though, as always with a Decemberists album, you may want to have a lyric sheet and thongs handy just in case you get a word like “roust-about” thrown at you.

Pop & Circumstance examines all things pop music every week.
Bullpen bounces back, offense comes alive late

BASEBALL, page 12

took over in the top of the ninth, but imploded quickly.

Receivers Aaron Arboleya and Jorge Marban both gave up six walks and six runs to Scott Rembisz in his fifth victory of the season.

Junior Arrojo led off the bottom of the ninth with a single. Pablo Bermudez bunted him over to second base.

Ryan Mollica, who hit two home runs in the game, was intentionally walked to face Tyler Townsend.

He hit a pitch back to the pitcher for the second out of the inning, but his groundout advanced the runners to second and third.

Steven Stropp could not avoid a fastball that hit to lead the bases. It was up to Tim Jobe to win the game.

But Justin Robichaux did let Jobe win with a game-winning grand slam. His inacuracy led him to walk Jobe to end the season battle.

The bullpen nearly cost the team the first game of the series, but head coach Turtle Thomas was pleased his team was able to fight back.

“No matter how we play, we’ll always take a conference win no matter which way you slice it or dice it,” Thomas said. “They made a good comeback and we made a good comeback of our own.”

FIU 11, UL 7

One day removed from his worst performance of the season, Jorge Marban was sent out in the eighth inning to close out the next game.

This time, Marban delivered.

“I just came in with a fresh start,” Marban said.

He mentioned head coach Turtle Thomas’ talk after the previous game helped him out.

“I wouldn’t be able to tell you word by word. It really helped me out because it knocked some sense into me because I really wasn’t focused last night,” he said.

Starting pitcher Tom Ebert, who came into the game with a 0.61 earned run average, gave up seven earned runs in 5 2/3 innings. He gave up runs early and often; he never dominated the Ragin’ Cajuns’ like he had his previous four opponents.

Yet, the Golden Panthers, fueled by a six-run fifth inning, rallied back from a 4-0 deficit to defeat the Ragin’ Cajuns 11-7 on March 28 at University Park Stadium.

WHEREAS the bullpen last night pitched one inning and gave up six runs, R.J. Fondon and Jorge Marban combined to pitch 3 1/3 innings and did not allow a run.

The win gives the Golden Panthers another series win and a 6-2 record against Sun Belt Conference teams.

That record places the Golden Panthers third in the conference behind Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky who both have 8-1 records.

Marban got his fourth save of the season and threw effective off-speed pitches rather than just fastballs.

For the second consecutive game, the Golden Panthers’ offense scored 11 runs and obtained 16 hits.

PITCHING supported by potent offense

TOWERS, page 12

As good as Mollica has been over the last two and a half weeks, Tyler Townsend has been that good and better ...

As good as Mollica has been over the last two and a half weeks, Tyler Townsend has been that good and better ...

For Saturday, the middle game in the series against the Ragin’ Cajuns, the bats were able to string together big innings and timely hitting, and in Jobe’s case, a timely bases loaded walk in the bottom of the ninth to walk off with a win on Friday’s game.

For Saturday, the middle of the Golden Panthers’ lineup hit five doubles in the innings to spark a six run fifth inning to bail out Tom Ebert, who finally had a bad outing after dominating with a 0.1 ERA through his first four starts.

Ebert allowed seven runs, five earned, to plate through 5 1/3 innings, with five strikeouts, to raise his season ERA all the way to 1.80.

Friday’s biggest problem was the bullpen, which allowed six runs in the top of the ninth to erase a workhorse performance from Scott Rembisz, who was effective without his best stuff.

However, on Saturday, freshman R.J. Fondon and closer Jorge Marban held the Cajuns’ scoreless through the final 3 1/3 innings to close the game out and pick up the win.

This is a team that is much improved from last year, and should be able to at least be competitive with the best of the Sun Belt.

And if the pitching continues to lead the conference in earned run average, the bats will hit enough to keep them near the top.
Cajuns in the first two games of the series. They scored 11 runs in both games to defeat the Ragin’ Cajuns, led by pitcher Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert. Despite managing to tag four runs on Rembisz and Ebert, the Golden Panthers’ offense scored seven runs on Ebert.

However, Rembisz and Ebert did not look like the dominant pitchers they’ve been all season. For the first time this season, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert did not look like the dominant pitchers they’ve been all season.

The University of Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns came into the series with the worst team batting average in the conference, but they came into the series with the worst team batting average in the conference. But the Golden Panthers' offense scored two more runs in the following inning to take a 4-3 lead. Rembisz retired the first nine batters he faced in order. The Ragin’ Cajuns could not figure him out. But the second time seeing him, they began to pile on hits against the Golden Panthers’ No. 1 starter.

After the two-run homer by Goulas, the Ragin’ Cajuns produced two more runs in the following inning to take a 4-3 lead. Rembisz retired the first nine batters he faced in order. The Ragin’ Cajuns could not figure him out. But the second time seeing him, they began to pile on hits against the Golden Panthers’ No. 1 starter. After the two-run homer by Goulas, the Ragin’ Cajuns produced two more runs in the following inning to take a 4-3 lead. Thus, the series to reserve judgment.

For the first time this season, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert did not look like the dominant pitchers they’ve been all season. But the Golden Panthers’ offense scored 11 runs in both games to defeat the Ragin’ Cajuns in the first two games of the series.

FIU 11, UL 10

RESURGENCE: Ryan Mollica hits against the Ragin’ Cajuns. Mollica is one of the hottest batters on the team. He hit two home runs against the Cajuns.

Through the first three innings, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and the Golden Panthers had the game on cruise control. Then in the fourth inning, they hit a bump in the road that came in the form of a two-run home run by designated hitter Matt Goulas. The rest of the game would be a contest with erratic pitching, a late inning meltdown and a walk-off victory against the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns on March 27 at University Park Stadium.

With the scored tied at 10, Tim Jobe came up to bat with the bases loaded and two outs. He jumped out of the way of a pitch that almost hit him. It would’ve ended the game instantly, but Jobe wanted to take matters into his own hands. “I wanted to hit it out,” Jobe said. “I was looking for a pitch to drive.” Instead, he saw four straight balls as he drew the game-winning walk to give the Golden Panthers the 11-10 victory. The win improved the Golden Panthers’ Sun Belt Conference record to 5-2, good for third in the conference.

The baseball team is 8-2 during that stretch. The Golden Panthers outscored their opponents 99-62.

Tony Robichaux’s Ragin’ Cajuns have led the Sun Belt Conference in team ERA for four straight seasons, a distinction FIU currently holds, and are usually among the Sun Belt Conference’s better teams, garnering a first place vote in the preseason coaches’ poll. If you were waiting for this series to pass judgment on the Golden Panthers, your opinion of them was probably not too different than before it. During the first two games of the three-game set, the Golden Panthers scored 11 in two games, with a lineup that is absolutely

If you were to judge FIU’s baseball team after their first 20 games, you’d be looking for a pitch to drive. Instead, he saw four straight balls as he drew the game-winning walk to give the Golden Panthers the 11-10 victory. The win improved the Golden Panthers’ Sun Belt Conference record to 5-2, good for third in the conference.

Through the first three innings, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and the Golden Panthers had the game on cruise control. Then in the fourth inning, they hit a bump in the road that came in the form of a two-run home run by designated hitter Matt Goulas. The rest of the game would be a contest with erratic pitching, a late inning meltdown and a walk-off victory against the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns on March 27 at University Park Stadium.

With the scored tied at 10, Tim Jobe came up to bat with the bases loaded and two outs. He jumped out of the way of a pitch that almost hit him. It would’ve ended the game instantly, but Jobe wanted to take matters into his own hands. “I wanted to hit it out,” Jobe said. “I was looking for a pitch to drive.” Instead, he saw four straight balls as he drew the game-winning walk to give the Golden Panthers the 11-10 victory. The win improved the Golden Panthers’ Sun Belt Conference record to 5-2, good for third in the conference.

Through the first three innings, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and the Golden Panthers had the game on cruise control. Then in the fourth inning, they hit a bump in the road that came in the form of a two-run home run by designated hitter Matt Goulas. The rest of the game would be a contest with erratic pitching, a late inning meltdown and a walk-off victory against the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns on March 27 at University Park Stadium.

With the scored tied at 10, Tim Jobe came up to bat with the bases loaded and two outs. He jumped out of the way of a pitch that almost hit him. It would’ve ended the game instantly, but Jobe wanted to take matters into his own hands. “I wanted to hit it out,” Jobe said. “I was looking for a pitch to drive.” Instead, he saw four straight balls as he drew the game-winning walk to give the Golden Panthers the 11-10 victory. The win improved the Golden Panthers’ Sun Belt Conference record to 5-2, good for third in the conference.