Medical school speculated to stimulate local economy

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 Tripp 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.

Silva withdraws candidacy

Ana Maria Silva, current president of the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus, withdrew her candidacy for her second term as president of SGC-BBC for the 2009-2010 school year March 27.

“I don’t look at [the withdrawal] as a disappointment, but as a different way to explore other opportunities, leading me to my academic future,” Silva said.

Silva said she had the opportunity to begin taking classes in the Full semester for the International Business Honors program, which is based at UP. To be eligible to president of SGC-BBC she needed at least 50 percent of her classes to be taken in the campus.

“Not being able to run is an opportunity for me to explore other options and possibilities at FIU,” she said. “It doesn’t mean I’m going to stop being involved and continue my leadership at FIU.”

Athletics feels effects of massive budget cuts

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.

“Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, which is based at UP. To be eligible to president of SGC-BBC she needed at least 50 percent of her classes to be taken in the campus. “Not being able to run is an opportunity for me to explore other options and possibilities at FIU,” she said. “It doesn’t mean I’m going to stop being involved and continue my leadership at FIU.”

Garcia insisted that cuts would not affect phase two of FIU Football Stadium, ticket sales, new streams of revenue from the就像橄榄球一样

Garcia insisted that cuts would not affect phase two of FIU Football Stadium, ticket sales, new streams of revenue from the就像橄榄球一样
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.

The Beacon would seek to unite organizations like the Haitian Students Association and Pan-African Organization, hopefully from both campuses, to be represented under this one banner," Phanord said in an interview with The Beacon after the meeting.

Meyer supported the BSU being instated as a governing council but felt that restrictions should be required with the move of organizations from the CSO to the new BSU council.

"I just think that we need to evaluate the efficiency of a move like this," Meyer said.

It was agreed later in the meeting that BSU would become its own governing council.

School revenue to benefit Sweetwater

The decision will be made after SFRTA holds a public meeting.

Moreover, the federal offer will only be valid until the end of the year, leaving the cost to the Florida government to cover.

The state’s unemployment rate rose in January to 3.2 percent.

No decisions have been made about the whether to increase the rate, it will be the first in 14 years that Tri-Rail fare is raised.

The Tri-Rail is funded by Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties as well as the state.

Florida lawmakers consider refusing stimulus money for the unemployed

Lawmakers proposed not to accept the $1 billion in stimulus cash that could benefit 250,000 unemployed.

Lawmakers said the package stipulates money for the unemployed.

The state’s unemployment rate rose in January to 3.2 percent.

According to the study, the economic prospects of the local community through the Neighbor- hood Help program, which is designed to help families in underserved communities.

For at least 10 years, the City of Sweetwater had been trying to reinvent itself as SGC president.

During the same meeting, the SGA vice president for Student Government.

Our organization would seek to unite organizations like the...
Car wash service begins 90-day preliminary run

JONATHAN DAVILA Staff Writer

A car wash service began March 30 on the first floor of the Gold Garage, becoming the second pilot program implemented by Parking and Transportation this semester.

The service will run for 90 days, at which time it will be evaluated to determine the future of the service.

“As you enter through the east entrance [of the Gold Garage], the area will be located to the left and clearly marked,” said Bill Foster, executive director of Parking and Transportation.

Regular washes cost $15 for small vehicles and $20 for large vehicles. A wash and wax costs $50 for small and $60 for large, and full detailing will cost $95 and $125, respectively.

All washes include tire shining and a vacuuming.

“It’s probably not something I would use. It’s like the valet parking," said junior international relations major Diego Sarmiento, who drives his vehicle to campus. “It seems like an inappropriate luxury.”

The revenue made from the pilot program will be used to support new food and retail venues on campus, according to Foster.

Business Services did not return a call seeking information about the company contracted in time for the publication of this article.

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The Internet has really negatively impacted two important pillars of society:

news media and libraries.

Frederick Blevens, professor
Journalism and Mass Communications

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

Cheryl Malone Staff Writer

Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications, Frederick Blevens, will be teaching 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 the Fall semester at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“The idea is to train people how to consume the news,” 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 ‘practise 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 Northup, 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

and media, according to the course syllabus.

While the class is restricted to junior and senior students within the Honors College, it is intended for a wide variety of students.

“The Honors College is based on interdisciplinary study, Northup explained. “Because of that, we will really enhance the abilities of students,” Northup said. “It meets in with course curriculum.”

English major Claudia Carcach believes that the course will be beneficial for students.

“Through the course, I think I would be able to learn how to differentiate an opinion from actual facts,” Carcach said. “The world today is really convenient if you want to know about something, people just Google it.”

Psychology major Elaine Nieves agrees with Carcach on the relevance of a class in the world of growing technology.

“It is a great way of getting students engaged in what is happening in our world, as well as giving

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 professor.

“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 Quicoño.

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 knotting.”

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 Maimo, a senior 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 work and schedule,” said Maimo. “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. to 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 public relations major has just published his first book, Obscure 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 Stephanie 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.”

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 meant to write a book.

“(People) think the writer is in control. I’m really 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
‘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 wellness. “I haven’t worked out in a while,” said Angela Thomas, a junior nursing major. “I have got to lose a little,” Boniface said.

Free food and pamphlets were funded by the Recreation Center.

Nusrath gave away fliers and free brownies,” said nutrition science major and Enidra Porter, junior nursing major, helped.

Healthy Measures:

HEALTHY MEASURES: (Top) Noor Nusrath (center), intern in the Rec Center at BBC, helps Denes 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 whose wife, Ashley Boniface, is an event management major.

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.

Nusrath, however, printed and designed all the information for the event. Nusrath hosted the “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 students. “I worked continuously from Monday and thought I needed to create something to make people aware,” Nusrath said. “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.”

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

Elias Bardawi, director of Campus Recreation and Warren Shaw, assistant director of Campus Recreation, suggested Nusrath use the Rec Center to host the event. I am doing 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 fliers 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 vegetables 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, unfit, overweight or underweight.

Free food and pamphlets were funded by the Recreation Center.

Nusrath, however, printed and designed all the information for the students walking by.

The monitor provides a bioelectrical impedance analysis which is used for estimating body composition, distinguishing water weight and subtracting other factors which may misconstrue one’s idea of their ideal body weight.

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‘Be Hip Be Fit Series’ aims to address healthy eating

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in Asian studies and hopes to one day teach English in Japan.

“Writing for me is my way of de-stressing. It’s my way of channeling my creativity. No matter what obstacles I have, I’ll see through to getting the story out,” he said. Obscure Origins can be purchased at any major bookstore for $27.95.
RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

Shalom Meirson
Kenasha Paul

What is probably the most difficult decision it had to make, The Beacon is in conclusion, believes Paul has decided not to officially endorse the only candidate, Christin “Cici” Remedios, because she was not eligible to run, but also because she feels that the students have the rights to look for other students or even officials are representing them. Paul plans on focusing his efforts on the Vice Provost Office at BCC as well as the Faculty Senate to reach a greater market. As a result, Paul is fulfilling their needs of better advising and involvement.

Rionda Gonzalez

The Beacon has enough time to work on building their plat- form, and by doing so, he will be able to do his part in addressing the rising cost of higher education. Students at FIU and other campuses demand transparency, accountability and efficiency in handling the student body business. At the current Student Government, the students are in control and will make sure that the students are involved.

By establishing an SGA endowment, the administration will have funds available for future years in order to continue to fund the current projects. Also, by making the FIUJobLink system more specific and better organized, students will have access to the information such as meeting minutes and voting records that they need to feel and understand that SGC-BBC is organized, based in real-world politics to conduct business and to have a more transparent relationship with SGC-UP.

Most of the candidates also cited parking as a critical concern that afflicts the student body. Ybanez noted the parking situation but also mentioned other issues pertaining to the parking policies that Paul promised in his platform. “Parking is a concern, we need to find ways to make sure that students can get where they need to go and that there is enough parking for student government.”

Paul believes that the relationship between SGC-BBC and SGC-UP is the key framework for a stronger and successful SGA and will work toward achieving a mutually beneficial relationship with SGC-UP.

On the green initiative, Paul will encourage anyone eligible to vote to please do so through their PantherNest student portal. She also feels that Paul will be able to communicate effectively with students at the university.

The Beacon recommends elections for the Student Government at the University Park campus.

The Beacon recommends elections for the Student Government at the University Park campus.

Although Neistein has great and strong ideas, he seems to lack the experience as well as the knowledge of those who want to vote. He feels that Paul will be the best leader for the student body.

In conclusion, the Beacon believes that the students will make a wise decision and will vote for Paul in the upcoming Student Government election. The Beacon recommends Kenasha Paul for the Student Government at the University Park campus.

Paul believes in transparency and will better use the resources of the SBCG-BBC Web site in order to inform the student body about what SGA is doing and also get input from students as well as getting them more involved. She also said that every voter’s vote will be made available in the Web site, not only because of transparency but also because of the many students that are voting for the first time, without having to go to their PantherNest account at m.y.fiu.edu.

Carlos “JC” Remedios for the Student Government Council vice presidency at the Biscayne Bay Campus was not a difficult one for The Beacon. After speaking with the candidate and the other three of the other candidates, Christin “Cici” Remedios, Alex Lastra, Maribel Chaluja, Daniel Gonzalez, and Daniela Gonzalez, The Beacon is in conclusion, believes that Remedios is the best candidate to represent the student body.

The Beacon has enough time to work on building their platform, and by doing so, he will be able to do his part in addressing the rising cost of higher education. Students at FIU and other campuses demand transparency, accountability and efficiency in handling the student body business. At the current Student Government, the students are in control and will make sure that the students are involved.

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FIU out of bounds in banning P2P

MATHIEW BUCKMAN
Staff Writer

On March 21, the University attempted to ban peer-to-peer file sharing on campus. This move would restrict students’ access to the Internet.

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

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

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 its students’ interest. The restricting of our access to the Internet should never be scope of education.

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

The RIAA is the trade group that is responsible for most lawsuits concerning the illegal downloading of music. The ban seems a bit absurd by itself; it ignores the murkiness of the legality of downloading. Yet because the 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.

Today many this will come as a shock. The restricting of access to content and information was probably never one of the University’s aims, yet this is what they are doing.

What this action 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 notifi cation e-mail stated, “This is simply false and can be supported 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, children are still 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 see 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.

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

MOHAMED ABDIHAKIM
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 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 more influential and crucial religious leaders. Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were good examples, going as far as citing the church as the “lowest grade of ignorance of our 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 daunting upon many is whether the United States has in fact become less Christian.

More important, my answer? A resounding yes.

In the Bush administration, several sensitive issues (more notably that of abortion) have been handled with Christ-embraced safety gloves. Many issues were brought almost immediately to a religious focus, often times dwelling 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 one 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 1990. 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 the “myth” to “realistic” Christianity.

If they really want to get themselves out they can, just as I did. Yes, 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 secularism. However, America still has its Christian roots buried in its subconscious. I was raised a Roman Catholic 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.

Fading Faith?

America still holds Christian values

ANDREW ZAMORA
Contributing Writer

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

Just two centuries 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 Donovan, 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 facets 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, children are still taught the 10 commandments and millions of Americans go to work every morning guided by a strong work ethic.

Likewise, America has been undergoing a transformation in government and the overall attitude of American society toward organized 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 Denis, 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 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 daunting aspect of a much “less Christian” country.

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Annika Denis, freshman psychology major

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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

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MOMENT OF CLARITY

Album quality, talent defines success in hyped hip-hop world

I get into arguments with people all the time about music, and while at times it can be interesting, sometimes it can be perturbing. 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. It cannot be said about what the most efficient way to rate these artists is. It requires some amount of dialogue to move the story along.

Meloy colors ‘Hazards of Love’ with steel guitars, mandolins

DECEMBERISTS, page 9

honesty, I don’t hear the details. The album format by design has to limit storytelling, as even the most well-crafted music theater requires some amount of dialogue to move the story along.

Much like The Who’s Tommy, it is obvious even on first listen that there is some sort of story here, even if it is so obtuse 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 Lover 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 folk sound of their earlier albums is built upon with new instruments to their canon, from pedal steel guitar to mandolin, and on “Don’t It Be 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/Repaid” 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 listens 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 listens 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 thesaurus handy just in case you get a word like “roundabout” 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.

Realtors 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 him to load the bases. It was up to Tim Jobe to win the game.

But Justin Robichaux did let Jofe win with a game-winning grand slam. His inaccuracy led him to walk Jofe to end the seabase 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 new 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 this outing.

"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. Fonond 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.

SUN BELT BASEBALL STANDING

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All records up to date as of Mar. 29

SUN BELT LEADERS

BATTING

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PITCHING

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TOWERS, page 12

devastating to opposing pitchers.

The Golden Panthers rank third in the conference in runs, on base percentage and slugging percentage, and have been especially dangerous from the two-six spots in the lineup.

Since starting 3-for-26 on the season, second baseman Ryan Mollica has gone 29-for-62, with six home runs, and has generally returned to being the player that hit more than .400 last season.

As he has heated up, so has the offense.

As go 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 ...

REACHING BASE: Steven Stropp gets on base against the University of Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns. The Golden Panthers scored 11 runs in each game.

The two through six hitters all had at least two hits against the Ragin’ Cajuns. The Golden Panthers began to get the offense going in the fifth inning.

Tim Jofe extended his hitting streak to 16 games, and he said seeing the pitcher a second time through the lineup was beneficial for the offense.

“You know what he has,” Jofe said. “You know how he’s going to come at you. Talking with the guys in here, you know what he’s going to throw. Certainly, seeing him twice helps a lot.”

Coach Thomas said the offense manages to score runs in a variety of ways because of the hitters’ versatile abilities.

“If you try to recruit a team that you got a few guys that hit some home runs, a few guys that could steal some bases, some guys that hit for high batting average,” he said. “If you’re lucky enough to have that type of team, you have a chance to keep some offensive pressure on the other team.”

PITCHING supported by potent offense
COMEBACK KIDS

Golden Panthers overcome deficits to win two games

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

For the first time this season, 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. 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 the following inning to take a 4-3 lead. The Golden Panthers’ offense did not let the Cajuns enjoy their lead for long by recapturing the lead with a two-run inning due to a series of singles capped off by a base hit by Mike Martinez.

For the Golden Panthers, the offensive onslaught continued. They scored three runs in the next inning and then in the eighth inning, Liakos and Martinez hit back-to-back home runs to give the Golden Panthers a 10-4 lead. Rembisz shut out the Ragin’ Cajuns for the next three innings as well. The bullpen

Baseball team proves to be a contender

Chris Towers

It you were following a college baseball team, you always want to give them a little time before you start judging them. More than any other sport, baseball performance is prone to fluctuations from game to game and week to week. Baseball, by its very nature, requires a large number of samples to get rid of some of the “noise” that comes with these fluctuations.

If you were to judge FIU’s baseball team after their first 20 games, you’d be looking at a team that, despite some obvious deficiencies, was able to dominate opponents on both sides of the ball. Through 20 games, Turtle Thomas’ squad made up largely of new players and some returning contributors, stood at a sterling 15-5 record, with a couple of late inning losses being the only blemishes.

For people following the Golden Panthers, the beginning in earnest of conference play, a three-game home set against the University of Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns was the series to reserve judgment. 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 both games, with a lineup that is absolutely