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WEATHER

WEDNESDAY
Isolated to scattered showers. LOY 46, HGH 86
THURSDAY
Partly cloudy. LOY 56, HGH 85
FRIDAY
Hazy sun. LOY 46, HGH 79

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Monetary fund donations enabled under revised code

David Barrios
Senior Staff Writer

Revised versions of the Student Government Financial and Elections Codes were passed during the April 13 meeting of the Student Government Council at University Park Senate.

The new version of the Financial Code, passed unanimously, requires all events paid for by Activities and Services Fees to be free for the student body unless they are Student Government Association sponsored concerts or events. Robert Chung, SGC-UP comptroller, presented the changes to the bill during the meeting. He also announced the SGC-UP Finance Committee still had $6,000 left from a budget exceeding $25,000 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

“This is the kind of oversight and accountability we’ve all been looking for,” said Chung. “I’d just like to thank all Republicans in SGA for this fiscal conservation.”

Elections Code revisions included the permission of monetary funds to be donated to SGA candidates during elections. In the previous version of the code, students were unable to receive monetary donations.

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For a good cause: Pikes hold a 24-hour bike ride for Anthony’s Light Foundation on April 13 at the Graham Center Pit. Dion Von Malke (left), Alan Faidergold (middle) and Maarter Kersters (right).

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Athletic Director Pete Garcia has hired eight new coaches in 12 sports since arriving at FIU in 2003. Most notably, Garcia has plucked football coach Mario Cristobal and baseball coach Turtle Thomas from the University of Miami and Arizona State, respectively.

After reassigning former men’s basketball coach Sergio Rouco to another position in the department, Garcia has reached into the National Basketball Association to fill his most recent vacancy. And by grabbing Isaiah Thomas from the New York Knicks’ front office, FIU made a splash April 14 with the addition of the former NBA coach. Thomas, a basketball

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The Presidential Search Committee unanimously approved six-figure contract terms for the new University president.

The vote was taken during an April 13 teleconference between committee members with various University administrators such as Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez, as well as members of the press.

The approval was assigned three days before the official deadline for sending in applications for the presidential post.

Committee members approved contract terms for a base salary of $500,000, with $180,000 in perks, bringing the new executive’s salary to $680,000.

Before the committee voted on the compensation package terms, members heard remarks from Chairman David Parker, as well as Compensation Chair Betsey Atkins.

“We’ve tailored the results of the study, with discussions with Greenwood Asher, as well as market conditions to FIU,” Parker said.

The University recently hired a firm to head a

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Students and the University community were invited to attend the Activity and Services Fee public hearing April 13, in order to voice their opinion regarding the possibility of an increase in the fee.

The A&S Fee Committee held the forum in the Graham Center Ballrooms.

The forum was conducted in order to help touch base with students regarding the new fee increases that will be implemented for those who began attending the University from Spring 2008. The majority of students who attended the forum felt the increase comes at an inopportune time considering the recent increase in several other costs they incur, which according to most, are paid out of their own pocket.

“I have to find a way to pay 15 percent of my tuition on my own and, if fees continue increasing, that will obviously become harder,” said Vanessa Garcia, a freshman health services administration and business major.

Other University fees and economic woes students are facing were addressed as well. When the topic of the technology fee arose, Student Government Council at University Park Senate President Arthur J. Meyer said he was the only person to not vote for its increase because although “an increase in fees is needed to sustain campus life,”

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Fees raise financial concerns

Diana Jordon
Staff Writer

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Search page 2

Basketball

Huge splash as NBA legend takes reins

Jonathan Ramos
Asst. Sports Director

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The Fifth University President

Presidential contract terms reviewed

Juli Menache
Staff Writer

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Search page 2
Possible fee increase met with mixed student reactions

Art Hertiott, a chemistry emeritus and Honors College professor, then provided an administrator's point of view.

"One of the difficulties the University has had with student life is the fact that everyone is a commuter student," he said, and in order to schedule more time to work to save money for the Fall semester.

The discussion and answer session also touched upon students' doubts and hesitations as to whether fees are allocated wisely and whether any difference in campus life can be seen with a fee increase.

Miami-Dade County commissioners consider "Ohama Avenue"

Miami-Dade County commissioners consider renaming a stretch of road in Opa-Locka after our 44th president.

"We need to make them understand where we're coming from," several students then voiced their concerns over economic increases in general by explaining that although $1.50 increase per credit may not seem astronomical on paper, in reality, the total adds up.

"One of the reasons I came to FIU was because of its relatively low tuition," said Fernanda Garcia, a junior human resources major.

“They now take classes in the summer, however, I need to pay somewhere in the high $800s, which I'm paying out of my own pocket.”

Several students explained they have had to reduce the amount of credits they will take. "In order to schedule more time to work to save money for the Fall semester." said, in his opinion, these kinds of expenditures on student activities have given the school more life and spirit and, he said, are necessary in order to compensate for University students not typically remaining on campus after class.

Some students, however, such as Vignesh Doraiswami, a senior and biology and religious studies major and GSC-UP senator, feel that the increase is necessary.

"Unlike the technology fee, the student Activity and Services Fee will benefit students directly," Doraiswami said. "In the end, it will provide for a better educational experience and it is a $25 sacrifice everyone can make. All it takes is refraining from buying that new pair of shoes.”

The Fee Committee will make its decision public on April 17.

Select associations give extra funds

The new code also requires University-wide e-mails be sent to students if technical difficulties occur during online voting during elections.

"It will allow potential candidates from not being locked out of elections due to financial difficulties. Also, since there are still limits to the amount of money raised, it's not like people can take advantage of this," said Chris Cabral, senator for the College of Liberal Sciences and one of the authors of the bill.

College of Law Senator Jeffrey Molina introduced an amendment stating that $725 to the Sports and Entertainment Law Society to aid in sending officers of the club to the 2009 Sports Lawyers Association Annual Conference.

"There are high chances of our children having autism, therefore we need to give back now to those being affected. This organization helps in providing awareness, researching for a cure and making the lives of those that are affected by this disease as comfortable as possible.

One of the events that the Alpha Xi Delta chapter is planning in order to raise money for their new cause is a football tournament that is scheduled for June 13.

According to Perez, this event is open to women and men. There will be teams made up of five individuals competing for the Fuzzy Football Champion title. The event will be held in Tropical Estates Park.

"Last summer alone this tournament rose more than $7,000 for The Learning Experience School, a local school that deals with children that have autism," Perez said.

In addition, Melissa Sabate, a member of the Alpha Xi Delta chapter, explained that this chapter will participate in Autism Speaks’ most popular annual event, Walk Now for Autism.

"Alpha Xi Delta's large membership base will offer as well an added advantage of this," said Sabate, a graduate student in the Higher Education Program. The chapter will also continue to work with other organizations to assist children with autism.

"We are also going to continue working hand-in-hand with organizations such as Good Hope Equestrian Center, which provides activities for children with autism," Perez said.

The partnership with Autism Speaks is one that Perez plans to continue in the years to come.

Perez, who plans to oversee many more events that pertain to autism, wants to make her sorority’s dedication to Autism Speaks known.

"The Alpha Xi Delta – Theta Xi chapter at FIU will support Autism Speaks 100 percent," Perez said.

Salary to be higher than national average

"We’ve come up with a richer, more comprehensive term sheet, tailored to our unique needs,” Parker said during the meeting. “We banned for negotiations. According to Parker, negotiations for the final candidate will begin at $552,000 and work its way up to the median.”

Park and Atkins also said that the evolving years of experience between candidates, as well as complications such as buying out the contracts of certain candidates, were also discussed during the meeting.

Dial presented an appropriation to give $1,200 to the Caribbean Student Association for transportation costs for the Florida CSA Annual Conference.

"The Alpha Xi Delta-Kappa Rho chapter at FIU will also continue its partnership with Autism Speaks,” Perez said.

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The April 15 SGA meeting will be a joint session of the executive and legislative branches.

Women fraternity pairs up with Autism Speaks

The Alpha Xi Delta Theta Xi, one of the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organizations, announced its partnership with Autism Speaks. This is the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organization, according to the Alpha Xi Delta press release.

The April 2 announce ment outlined various events that the women fraternity will hold in conjunction with the organization.

In the United States, it is estimated that one in every 150 children will be diagnosed with autism, according to the Autism Speaks Web site.

This rate is rising by 10 to 17 percent annually. To prevent the gradual increase of this disease, the organization is dedicated to raising awareness, funding research, prevention and treatment.

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Students back to the ‘80s

With many students spending late nights studying for exams during finals week, the Biscayne Bay Campus Office of Campus Life and Orientation is bringing students back to the ‘80s.

“We want to bring back all the cool stuff from the ‘80s and bring you back to when you were a kid,” said Lorie Bellot, a graduate assistant who works for Campus Life.

The breakfast will take place in Cafe-teria Loggia, the space located behind the Wolfe University Center, on April 20. The event starts at 6:30 a.m., with breakfast being served at midnight and scheduled to finish at 2 a.m.

Traditional midnight breakfast fare such as eggs, pancakes, coffee, bacon and juices will be provided.

“Everything comes with the works... The pancakes with strawberry syrup, whipping cream and chocolate chips,” Bellot said.

To go with the decade theme, the music will play all be from the ‘80s and will range from pop and rock songs to television theme songs from shows such as the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.” Bellot said that impersonators of ‘80s stars such as Michael Jackson and the actors of the show “Miami Vice” may also make guest appearances.

“We want to keep a few surprises,” said Bellot. “We’re going to have arts and crafts projects like when you were a kid.”

While the arts and crafts projects are not going to be unveiled until the day of, there will be rhinestones, mood rings and “a montage of all things eclectic.”

In addition to the crafts, there will be free massages, zumba classes and classic Nintendo games such as Mario Kart and card games like Uno.

“I liked it because of the food and games they had set up,” said junior Joe L. Mintz, a mathematics major, referring to last year’s event. “We want to bring back all the cool stuff from the ‘80s and bring you back to when you were a kid.”

The breakfast is a study break at its core. To help aid students in taking finals, Campus Life and Orientation is bringing students back to the ‘80s and bring you back to when you were a kid.”

“The lecture, sponsored by the Biscayne Bay Campus Student Government Council Lecture Committee, Office of Campus Life & Orientation and the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services, is free for students, faculty and staff. “I think it’s really good that he’s going to be coming,” said Daniel Anzuro, senior psychology major. “I was pleasantly surprised when the Lectures Committee chose him. I’m excited to meet him.”

Anzuro, who is also vice president of Stonewall 2 BBC, a student club and BBC Student Government Council Lecture Committee chair. “It’s just a great story.”

The lecture is also open to the general public with a suggested donation of $20 to benefit the BBC Excellence Fund, a foundation commonly used to fund University needs, including leadership activities and scholarships.

After the lecture, Milk will be shown in the theater and attendees who have not seen the film will have the chance to do so.

For more information on this event, call the Office of Campus Life & Orientation at (305) 919-5804.
**READ THIS NOW!**

Cuba embargo has its pros, cons

**JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ**

Staff Writer

It has been the talk around the table on weekends when my family unites. There is the rice with beans, pork, a flank for dessert and Cuba-America politics to help the digestion.

For five decades the United States has implemented sanctions which were part of a regime and imposed an embargo that, to an extent, still exists to this day.

I believe that the end of the embargo would provide an opportunity to inform Cuban nationals about their natural civil rights and the activities that the Cuban government has done and continues to do, such as the Black Spring, in which 75 political opponents were imprisoned and sentenced upon 25 years.

This issue has been the root of many debates between Cubans inside and outside of the island, and even U.S. senators who visit the island. Those in favor of the embargo hope that the sanctions will cause the demise of the Cuban government and democratize it internationally. They demand civil rights inside the island for the Cuban government to respect the International Declaration of Human Rights, which Cuba signed in 1948.

Critics of the embargo argue that 50 years have proven that it is a useless strategy to end totalitarian regimes. To complicate matters, things are much more complex. It has been reported that the embargo has forced Cuba to recognize the importance of an alliance with the U.S. The country has suffered economic challenges since the fall of the Soviet Union in the 90s and continues to feel the effects of recent hurricanes. Agricultural, mainly, has been what has suffered. The government has stopped receiving large quantities of financing from Cuban-Americans who visit the island or send remittances.

It was believed that after Castro bestowed power to his brother Raúl Castro in 2006, Cuba would finally see some changes. Raúl has proven to be an excellent replica of the ailing leader that publishes his reflections in the country’s newspaper, Granma.

“The fact remains that the situation in that country, as it relates to the freedom of its own citizens, does not seem to have changed with the departure of Fidel Castro from the presidency,” said Jeffrey Davidow, the White House adviser for the upcoming Summit of the Americas.

But the embargo has failed to end Raúl Castro’s absolute power. They are still the captains of a very decaying ship.

The ease of travel restrictions recently implemented by President Obama has caused great commotion. It is estimated that close to three million Americans will visit the island under the new law. Family members can now visit the island once a year, stay as long as they wish and spend up to $179 a day.

Andy Garcia said at the Roots of Hope conference at the University of Miami, “The necessity for freedom is non-negotiable. We all have the dream of a free Cuba.”

The end of the embargo should take place only if the Cuban government releases its political prisoners and promises to respect the most important right of all, freedom of expression.

**Homosexuality is not an ailment**

**MATTHEW RUCKMAN**

Staff Writer

A poll recently conducted in the United Kingdom revealed that a significant number of psychiatrists have treated and were willing to treat their patients for homosexuality. Essentially, they are attempting, at the behest of the patient, to make them straight.

The report stated, “The researchers questioned more than 1,400 mental health professionals on whether they would accept a client’s request to change their sexual orientation, if requested to do so. Although only one in 25 (4 percent) said that they would do so, one in six (17 percent) reported having assisted at least one client to reduce their gay or lesbian feelings, usually through therapy.”

From the outside, this seems horrifying. There is no real data on how helpful and safe such treatments could be. This culminates in the practice of psychiatrists comprehensively treating homosexuality as something to be cured is wrong. Homosexuality is probably innate and there from birth, though nobody is sure.

A cure for homosexuality would be the psychiatric equivalent of having a lobotomy. The people who are approaching these therapists are not just homosexuals. They’re unsure bisexuals, reconstituted homosexuals and maybe confused heterosexuals.

They are the borderline, the shades of gray in the area of gay. It’s about the homosexuals who might be straight and the heterosexuals who might be gay. Their sexual admixtures and the affecting social conditions are not always easy to throw a label on, and their positions are not always concrete.

In this, maybe, the therapist can help – with the “other stuff.” The therapy of position has always seemed to me – to counsel you in order to guide you through a process of accepting yourself, establishing things that you may want or need to change, and verifying whether you are able to change them.

If a homosexual wants to decide ultimately if they are gay or not, therapy may help do this, or at the very least deny who they are more thoroughly. The larger tragedy looming over all these possibilities is that even feel compelled to go to therapy because of their sexual orientation. They have no disease and are seeking a cure for what is very obviously a social disease – intolerance.

Unfortunately, no cure exists for that ailment.
Club promotes environmental action

LAUREN AGOSTI
Staff Writer

Going green isn’t the latest craze - it’s been the main focus of a small group of students on campus for more than ten years. Students for Environmental Action first began in the late 1990s, disbanded for several years after that and returned in Fall 2008. Since its return, the organization implemented a single stream recycling program on campus, which allows paper, plastic, glass and aluminum to be disposed of in the same bin.

“We provide different opportunities for students to engage in environmental action, for example by going dumpster diving or having events open to FIU students to raise awareness for students who don’t know about issues that are going on in our environment and how they can take that into consideration when furthering their careers,” said Stephany Alvarez, co-president of SEA. "It’s important for students to get involved now so they can learn how their actions are affecting our environment and how they can make a difference in their field, even doing little things like using recycled paper.”

The main goals of SEA are to create awareness about environmental issues, locate resources and events for active involvement and promote a healthy environment at FIU.

“This is the first green initiative club at FIU. It has been the first to show FIU students that going green is actually one of our priorities right now at FIU and also at a national level,” said Karen Pannocchia, graduate advisor for Students for Environmental Action. "We do have students involved with that and they can do something about it.”

SEA hopes to use FIU as a leading example to the rest of the nation and familiar with budget deficits and program cuts, by reducing our expenses, we could allocate more money to actual education purposes, professors and programs, thus making FIU better in every aspect: not only academically but also by becoming a great example to the rest of the community,” said Carolina Cabal, secretary of SEA.

On April 6, the first day of Earth Week 2009, FIU’s Students for Environmental Action held its “Focus on Green Energy Day” at the University Park campus. Its main purpose was to inform students about the harmful consequences of the energy sources currently being used like coal, nuclear energy and oil. Some consequences of the widespread use of these resources are pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, climate change, destruction of natural habitats and major health problems.

The organization is trying to implement a “Green Fee,” a fee of about $0.75 – $1 per credit enrolled in. A committee comprised mostly of students and some faculty and administration members will manage the funds brought in by the Green Fee.

Better energy efficiency in buildings, the acquisition of solar panels and photovoltaic cells, conversion of wastes into energy, plus many other technologies, will help FIU excel in the no-national effort of achieving energy independence from non-renewable, dirty and dangerous sources.” Cabal said.

In order to find out students’ opinions, SEA has been surveying FIU students to find out what they think of the new Green Fee. According to Cabal, the surveys have shown an overwhelming support of the fee.

The group also participated in PowerShift 2009 in Washington, D.C., where students from all over the nation united to lobby Congress for climate change policy and action, which proved successful with Congressman Henry Waxman and Congressman Ed Markey introducing the American Clean Energy and Security Act, a landmark climate and energy bill.

"We can’t wait to meet more new people: the more we are, the more hands that can work together to achieve a just, clean and more positive world,” Cabal said. "Please unite our efforts. Let’s change the world, starting with our school!”

For more information about Students for Environmental Action, please contact raaf@ufl.edu.

It’s important for students to get involved now so they can learn how their actions are affecting our environment and how they can make a difference.

Stephany Alvarez
co-president, Students for Environmental Action

Promises to yourself are the first to go

EDDITH SEVILLA
Asst. Life! Editor

As the weeks and months of this Spring Semester diminished, my weight did not.

At the start of the semester, I vowed to lose 30 pounds – 15 of which I had gained since the onset of my relationship with my boyfriend Charlie.

I asked you, my readers, to join me as I embarked on this journey. I wrote about Web sites, exercises, health and more to keep us motivated. I read health articles, went to health fairs and even worked out at the University Park Campus gym – not a pleasant experience to say the least, but that’s a story for another day.

And through it all, life happened. Between the demands of my job, schoolwork and my personal problems, losing weight took the back burner.

There are no excuses for this. But then again this is not a column on how sorry I am for not meeting my own expectations. Rather, it is a personal account of my struggles with losing weight while my partner shed the pounds.

Charlie unknowingly embarked on this journey with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us. And as my will to resist chocolate collapsed with us.

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water and more. While both Charlie and I have enjoyed these treats, my sick obsession with chocolate drove me to the vending machine time and time again for a mouth-watering Crunch bar. I ate whatever I wanted and Charlie watched what he ate. I ate midnight snacks while Charlie refrained from them.

To say the least Charlie has lost 18 pounds since the start of the semester. On the contrast I gained a few pounds. (OK, I gained three, but it’s still weight.) I have been counting down the days to graduation for almost two months now.

This time next week, I will be five days shy from my graduation ceremony – a thought that thrills me, but at the same time makes me feel like a failure for not losing
Pirates: a threat to peace on campus

CHRIS CABRAL
Staff Writer

With all the talk about the economy in the news these days, America and its leaders have forgotten about the biggest threat facing the U.S. today: pirates.

After years of being glamorized and glorified in film and television by the pirate sympathizers at Disney, our ocean dwelling enemies have struck us once again. Impressional Somalis, likely influenced by the Pirates of the Caribbean films, have taken to the high seas to steal, kidnap and engage in various other shenanigans—deadly shenanigans.

In these times of economic tribulation, rarely is the question asked: Are Disney films turning our children into murderous buccaneers? And are our leaders doing enough to protect us from our Johnny Depp-loving, blood-thirsty kids?

These are questions our leaders have been all too eager to ignore. In the first few months of his presidency, Barack Obama has focused almost exclusively on the economy, healthcare and foreign policy. Not once has he patrolled the waters off our coastline to beat back the hordes of pirates no doubt waiting to pilfer our valuables, ransack our homes and reclaim the rum of their captain, Morgan.

While Obama has been wise to stock his cabinet with veterans of sea combat—including Hillary Clinton, who killed three pirates off the coast of Bermuda in 1983—he has still left our country vulnerable to attack. As former Vice President Cheney has warned us, the impending closure of our island military base is closed they can once again. Impressionable enemies have struck us once again. Impressional Somalis, likely influenced by the Pirates of the Caribbean films, have taken to the high seas to steal, kidnap and engage in various other shenanigans—deadly shenanigans.

While the Golden Panther SEALs (GPS) are heavily armed and dangerous (to pirates), Meyer assures us, the well-armed military force that silently watches over our every move, prepared to subdue any pirate at a moment’s notice if one should threaten a student, administrator or faculty member.

What are you talking about? What the f*ck?” said Douglas Reilly, a junior theatre major.

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What are you talking about? What the f*ck?” said Douglas Reilly, a junior theatre major.

While the Golden Panther SEALs (GPS) are heavily armed and dangerous (to pirates), Meyer assures us, the well-armed military force that silently watches over our every move, prepared to subdue any pirate at a moment’s notice if one should threaten a student, administrator or faculty member.
FIU welcomes sixth hoops head coach

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ISIAH THOMAS

- Most Outstanding Player of the 1981 NCAA Basketball tournament for National Champion Indiana Hoosiers
- Second overall pick, 1981 NBA Draft
- Twelve-time NBA All-Star
- Two-time NBA Champion
- 1990 NBA Finals MVP
- National Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee, 2000
- Executive Vice President, Toronto Raptors 1994-1998
- Head Coach, Indiana Pacers, 2000-2003, record 131-115

Thomas, 47, became part owner and executive vice president of the expansion Toronto Raptors in 1994. In addition, Thomas purchased the Continental Basketball Association in 1998, and he owned the league for two years.
Pitcher Cassady reunited with mentor after rocky detour

LEILANI LAUREANO
Staff Writer

After two years of battling epilepsy at Presbyterian College, junior pitcher Paige Cassady transferred to FIU to play for head coach Beth McClendon, the pitching instructor she met nine years ago.

Now, Cassady is back under the tutelage of the only coach who understood her.

“She has taught me everything when it comes to pitching,” said Cassady. “I owe her a lot.”

McClendon helped Cassady battle health issues for several years. Cassady was diagnosed with epilepsy and had three seizures while at Presbyterian. One of the seizures occurred during a game, while Cassady was pitching.

“The doctors gave me medicine for the seizures, which made me depressed,” she said. “Then they gave me anti-depression medicine. It was a rough two years.”

Cassady said she did not enjoy her time at Presbyterian, not only because of the health issues, but because the coaching staff didn’t understand her.

“The coaches did not know how to push me,” she said. “They pushed me in a way that I would take it personally, and it did not make me a better pitcher.”

But McClendon knows how to motivate her. Cassady said her new coach understands her health problems, but doesn’t take it easier on her.

“Coach knows how to push me,” Cassady said. “She knows I will not give up and quit.”

Cassady’s father had arranged one-on-one pitching lessons with McClendon when she coached at Seton University from 2000 to 2002. Cassady was in middle school when she had her first pitching lesson with McClendon, and they have kept in contact ever since.

Knowing that Cassady was unhappy at Presbyterian, McClendon believes her pitcher is much happier being a Golden Panther. She’s closer to her home in Orlando than Presbyterian, which is in South Carolina.

“Cassady feels a lot more comfortable here,” McClendon said. “She has more in common with these girls, and she is a great teammate.”

While at Presbyterian, Cassady did have success pitching, though. She was the team’s ace and was named to the All-Big South Conference Team in 2007. But McClendon believes becoming a Golden Panther has been a bit harder on Cassady physically.

“FIU is more competitive than Presbyterian,” McClendon said. “We are more athletic, and Cassady did not know what to expect, but she is a very hard worker.”

Since the seventh grade, Cassady has been close with McClendon, and when her one-time pitching instructor moved to Houston to coach the University of Houston, she visited her often.

“She is a strong leader and has a bright future.”

Golden Panthers drop series finale; New Orleans next

SERGIO BONILLA
Assistant Sports Director

Down 11-2, the Golden Panthers had little hope of coming back. They hit themselves back into the game against Middle Tennessee University State Blue Raiders, but they fell short in the last game of the series.

The Blue Raiders defeated the Golden Panthers 13-9 on April 12 at Murfreesboro.

For the first time this season, the Golden Panthers lost a three-game series.

They lost to the team that was sitting directly above the Panthers in the Sun Belt Conference standings coming into the series. FIU’s record stands at (20-12, 9-6, Sun Belt) and MTSU is (24-8, 13-5) on the season.

Starting pitcher Cory Polizzano could not make it through three innings as he gave up eight runs, seven earned. Blue Raiders’ starting pitcher fared better than Polizzano, but he did not have an easy five innings of work. He gave up three runs and walked five Golden Panthers.

The Panthers scored in six of the game’s nine innings. Brett Wilson had an ugly win and an ugly win is better than a pretty one any day of the week. He was struggling in the first and then got the reverse pick to get out of the inning,” head coach Steve Peterson told goblueraiders.com. “We just have to be better out of the bullpen. Woods did a good job but we have to get help in the bullpen before we bring him in.”

Each team had to use five different pitchers to finish the deciding game of the series. Both teams had several hits, but the Blue Raiders had six hit go for extra bases.

For the Blue Raiders, Drew Robertson was a triple shy of the cycle. Nathan Hines and Grant Box had two hits each and Zach Hudson had a two-run homer.

“Hudson has been struggling but I was very proud of the way he came out and played today after a bad day yesterday. Thought Box had a big hit and then Drew put the game away and had a couple of other big hits for us today,” Peterson said, according to goblueraiders.com.

Ryan Mollica led the Panthers’ offense going 3-for-4 with a hit and four RBI. Tyler Townsend went just 1-for-5. Junior Arrojo hit his first career home run as well.

DIFFERENT SEASON

Despite dropping two of three games on the road to the No. 2 team in the conference, the Panthers’ progression from last season is evident. Last season it took the team 56 games to reach the 20-win mark. It took the Panthers just 31 games to accomplish the same feat this season.

The most telling statistic is the team difference in team ERA. Last season the team’s ERA was 7.12, through 32 games, the Panthers’ ERA is 4.96, which is No. 1 in the conference.

Newcomers Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert have brought stability to the top of the pitching staff. They boast the two best ERAs in the Sun Belt Conference.

DROPPING

The most significant outcome of the series is how the Panthers went from the third spot to the fifth spot in the conference standings. Troy University and the University of Louisiana-Monroe currently hold the third and fourth spots, respectively. Troy is 10-5 and ULM is 11-7. The Golden Panthers face New Orleans, the last place team in the Sun Belt from April 17-19.