SGC-BBC EXPENDITURES

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<th>Item</th>
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**SGC-UP**

Meyer discusses final plans

**DAVID BARRIOS**

Senior Staff Writer

With his presidential term coming to a close, Student Government Council at University Park President Adam J. Meyer still has a lot of work ahead of him before he steps down from his position on May 1.

Meyer, SGC-UP president for the 2008-2009 school year, reflected on his accomplishments and regrets while being in office. He ran on several major platform points including the expansion of the PantherTram system into a point-to-point system to alleviate traffic, the development of PantherTV and the implementation of a comprehensive Environmental Action Plan.

Meyer said during a farewell interview with Student Media that he is still pushing forward for the establishment of PantherTV, a television network for FIU.

“We’re looking to secure funding for PantherTV within the next two weeks,” he said.

To date, PantherTV has yet to be created and funded.

“It’s not a one year thing where we start it and we’re done and PantherTV is online. It’s not something that can happen in one year,” Meyer said.

“That’s one of the issues with one-year terms for presidents — that I can’t see the program through. We’re laying the foundation.”

Meyer said that there were two failures during his administration.

“One of those was the environmental issues that we wanted to make a key goal during the year. We would like to have seen more in that area. There were issues in respect to leadership in that area,” Meyer said.

Meyer also said that he wished he had been more available but had to fulfill obligations as much as he had hoped to. I’m traveling a lot. It’s a toll on myself personally and on this office. Paige (LaPointe) and Anthony (Rodriguez) have done an excellent job of taking the reins while I’m gone,” Meyer said.

Meyer discussed the Relay for Life incident when the organization, a charity for cancer treatment, was unable to hold its annual event at FIU Stadium. Student outrage ran high as rumor spread that football coach Mario Cristobal had scheduled a football practice that would interfere with the event, which had been planned during the Fall of 2008. Cristobal, however, stated that the practice was scheduled a football practice that would interfere with the event, which had been planned during the Fall of 2008. Cristobal, however, stated that he would cooperate in any way possible to aid Relay for Life. The event was eventually moved from the football stadium to the front of the Ryder Business Building.

“Do I think that it tweaked the relationship between the student body and athletics? Most definitely. Do I think that the relationship between student groups and athletics has changed slightly? Sure. Do I think that it should? It may have to, so we understand the Athletics Department. It’s a partnership that needs to be solidified,” Meyer said.

**MEYER, page 2**

**SCHOLARSHIPS, page 2**

**Scholarship competition FIU exclusive**

**SOLDANAYS MUJICA**

Staff Writer

Once again, it’s the annual University-wide Scholarship Competition and applications for the available scholarships are due online April 30. The Scholarship Committee is awarding more than 100 scholarships, valued at a total $100,000, from scholarship funds donated by private donors and held in trust by the FIU Foundation.

Incoming freshmen, current students, transfer students and graduate students can apply for most of these available scholarships just as long as they meet the requirements.

“We want to encourage current and future FIU undergraduates and graduate students to apply for these scholarships,” said Scholarship Committee Co-Chair Consuelo Boronat in a media release.

The main requirement is for students to have a minimum GPA of 3.0. There are other scholarships that require higher minimum GPAs, and three undergraduate scholarships require minimum GPAs of 2.5 or 2.75.

When students fill out the applications, they are required to attach two recommendation letters along with it. The recommendation letters should be from professionals such as previous or former professors or employers and not from family or friends. In order to apply, students can log on to their
It’s another way to attract people to events,” Beccera-Pineda said. “But we also want people to see the information that is being present at these events that are held.”

SAVING MONEY

Like many clubs and organizations, SGC-BBC has seen a steady decrease in its operating budget and is looking for ways to save. Rafael Zapata, assistant director of Campus Life and advisor for SGC-BBC said the council has combined retreats with other student organizations to reduce costs and is co-sponsoring many events with the Student Programming Council and other organizations on campus. Another area that is being looked to cut down in its travel budget is on travel. In 2006-2007, SGC-BBC spent $18,956.41 on travel. The largest amount came from the Key Largo on June 1, 2007, which ended up costing $8,496.06. In 2008-2009, SGC-BBC spent $8,496.06 on travel — $5,024.50 of which was spent on sending four students to the National States Student Association in Washington, D.C.

“The best way to save money for students and the council is to cut down travel expenditures as well as creating a free printing lab,” said SGC-BBC President-elect Sholom Neistein.

BUDGET TRAINING

Matilde Gramling, director of Budget and Personnel, said that her office is responsible for reviewing all of the accounts in Student Affairs but doesn’t have a specific transaction made by clubs and organizations. That responsibility falls under each club or organization’s advisor.

At SGC-BBC, that responsibility would fall to advisors Zapata and Beccera-Pineda. Throughout the year, Zapata said he’ll work with advisors to make sure that A&S fees can and can’t be spent on and advises SGC- BBC members on how best to use the funds they’ve been allocated.

“We teach them how you are supposed to spend the money,” Zapata said. “It may seem insignificant, but it's another way to attract people to events.”

“Perpetual Motions” dance and the improvisation will differ for each night as well, according to Barrett.

Joanne Barrett, one of the key choreographers and faculty. Our special topics class, which devotes its time to improvisation, will do specific work outside the theater while audi-

dance theater and contempo-

rary ballet,” Barrett said. In order to make this performance more special than the rest, Barrett has made sure that all the work the dance department has done in the past will also be showcased.

“We will also have a continuous video playing in the lobby of past guest choreo-

graphers and faculty. Our special topics class, which devotes its time to improvisation, will do specific work outside the theater while audi-

dance is coming,” Barrett said. In addition, each night will have live musical performances and as well as an audio-visual, multimedia production, according to the “Perpetual Motions” press release.

A caterer has been invited to provide different foods for each night of the performance.

Dance program bows out with show

Corrections

In the issue dated April 15, the front page picture caption should have said that the persons on the bikes were members of Pi Kappa Phi, not Pikes.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors.

Call our office at 305-348-2709 or Fax at 305-919-4722.

MEENA RUPANI

Staff Writer

Due to budget concerns, the dance department is being phased out and will be holding its final performance. The performance will be held from April 16-19 at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center.

According to Professor Joanne Barrett, one of the key organizers and choreographers, this final performance called “Perpetual Motions” will be showcasing student and faculty work along with various styles of dance. "The performance showcases the students dancing and some of the senior graduate choreography works. Also, the evening will exemplify our diverse program which will include the styles of Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, hip-hop, physical dance theater and contempo-

rary ballet,” Barrett said. In order to make this performance more special than the rest, Barrett has made sure that all the work the dance department has done in the past will also be showcased.

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Festival showcases students’ environmental initiatives

DAIANA KUCAWCA
Copy Editor

The Wolfe University Center hosts a series of green events throughout the year, but this time they wanted to do something different: let students decide.

Zach K. Trautenberg, IT and marketing specialist, decided to organize the “Wolfe University Center Go Green Film Festival,” a contest in which students can make and submit a five-minute original public service announcement in DVD format. Participants can choose from one of the following topics: “Do’s and Don’ts of Recycling,” “10 Things You Can Do to Green Your Life,” or “Coastal Environment at Biscayne Bay Campus.”

Trautenberg said he wanted to do something about environmental awareness that didn’t involve the University telling students what to do.

“We wanted to engage students and staff to learn from their viewings,” Trautenberg said. “That’s also why we’re not going to make the films ourselves. Students can submit applications to participate in the contest until today, but the films are due April 20.

Entries will be screened on Earth Day, April 22, at the BLC’s Wolfe Center in Panther Square at noon and voted on by students and staff attending. Food and refreshments will be served during the event. According to Trautenberg, any genre and type of film is acceptable as long as it is creative.

“The idea is to get the message across,” Trautenberg said, referring to the film festival’s message of environmental awareness.

According to Trautenberg, the contest was made only for students, “but if you want to include a little brother and sister in the video, it’s OK.”

All contestants will be receiving an organic T-shirt regardless of how many votes they get. T-shirts will be grey or blue and will read on the front “Organic Florida International University.” On the back they’ll read “I am a green T-shirt.”

The shirt’s brand is Eden Live, which makes clothes in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Africa, to raise money to fight AIDS in the country where “over 30 percent of the workforce [in the country] is HIV positive,” according to the brand’s Web site.

Contest winners will get a $100 certificate for the FIU Bookstore and will have their PSAs streamed on the WUC’s Web site.

Trautenberg said the inspiration for the film festival came from the “Chill Out: Campus Solutions to Global Warming” national contest. The competition recognizes campuses who propose original global warming solutions videos by streaming them on their Web site and awarding free concerts to the best campus-based climate action, according to the National Wildlife Association’s Web site, who organizes the event.

According to Trautenberg, the environmental coordinator for the Office of the Vice Provost, Jennifer Grimm, came out with the ideas for the proposed topics, which she’s helping promote to all the different environmental science classes.

“I think it’s a great thing to bring the green initiative to people so that they can get involved,” Grimm said.

Among the students getting involved in the festival are the members of the Film Union Club, Natalya Cohen, a freshman journalism major and the club’s president, said students from her club will submit entries individually. She is also planning on focusing on the “10 Things You Can Do to Green Your Life” theme.

“It’s nice they’re doing something artistic that’s green as well,” Cohen said. “When you have a group of students trying to do something together, that itself raises awareness.”

This isn’t the first time the WUC has done something for the green initiative.

Gregory Olson, senior director of student affairs and WUC director, said the University had participated on other green initiatives previously to comply with the University’s Commitment Task Force established on September 17, 2007, which aimed at having long-term efforts of environmental sustainability in the community.

Other WUC events with an environmentally-friendly theme have included the “Go Green Luncheon,” where an event planner taught students how to make greener events; the “Go Green Bingo,” where students had to complete a bingo based on green activities they had done and the “Go Green Day,” Where a fair was set up and businesses from the community show their green products, according to Trautenberg.

“We wanted to get students to do something before break. This was just part of going green,” Olson said. “If it’s successful, we’ll do it again.”

Applications for the film festival can be found at the WUC Web site at www.fiu.edu.

RICE SNACKS: Naor Nusrath, a senior nutrition science major, serves Warren Webster, a junior advertising major, healthy food alternatives, demonstrated in the “Be Hip Be Fit Series: Health Food Seminar” in Panther Square, April 13. The seminar focused on making quick meals without cooking.

Healthy Lifestyle Tips

Summer is here and that means my favorite time of year is about to start: concert season.

Those who know me would probably never peg me as the rock show, but I have a mini confession – I used to be a semi-emo kid in high school, only I never rocked the hair style. But as a result of my emo days, I have a soft spot for rock. Every year I know first-hand the turmoil that everyone goes through before and after a show when the question is asked: “Where am I going to hang out?”

This week’s New Found Glory concert at Revolution Live in Fort Lauderdale gave me the chance to find the perfect spots to chill before and after moshing and getting hit in the head by crowd surfing.

To pre-game a show, you could spend the afternoon in the parking lot of the venue drinking beer from the trunk of a friend’s car, or you can be more civil and go to Cafe Bambino, at 3073 NE 163 St., North Miami Beach.

This is an organic sandwich, coffee, pizza and ice cream store that provides a great relaxing atmosphere.

The place has white seats, light purple walls and dark wood floors – all of which screams modern and welcoming.

This place is not only great for pre-gaming a concert, but also for those who have kids. For only $5, you can eat a good meal while the kids play with the Wii and other toys they have in the play area.

I had a tuna sandwich for $7.95, which to me was made perfectly because there was no mayo mixed with the fish.

Back, they even gave me big chunks of tuna instead of the shredded pieces that normally come with a tuna sandwich. It also came with chips that tasted like Fritos, only they were long and colorful.

The menu is healthy (there is nothing fried or oily) and the food gave me the energy I needed to fight off people at the concert – no one has ever been to a pop-punk show without hitting someone or getting hit.

Even though this place is kid-friendly, don’t let it stop you from enjoying it. They aren’t too loud and the mood is so relaxing that you will be thinking more about moshing than thinking kids.

But the most important part of a concert is the post-game. You just want to go somewhere that you can go on play-play-with your friends about everything that happened 10 minutes earlier.

I love going to Steve’s Pizza, at 1201 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami. If there was anywhere that has a punk-rock feel to it, this is it.

The place just looks hardcore, even though the entire restaurant is a little bigger than the average dorm room. The smell of pizza in this small area is totally intoxicating.

You can’t help but notice that every piece of furniture is written on, and I think they ran out of space on the chairs and tables because the beige walls are now starting to see marks on them. Of course, I added my name onto the chair I was sitting on.

I ordered a cheese pizza and right from the time you order you notice that these people take pizza seriously. Their motto is “the best pizza you’ve ever had.” It may sound cynical but think about it, at most shows, food and drinks cost so much it is way more effective to eat and drink beforehand.

The last concert I went to, it was $3 for a slice of pizza that was the size of a Pizza Hut slice and had probably been sitting under heat lamps for eight hours. Why not wait an extra couple of hours and get a slice for 50 cents less that is twice the size of the one from most venues? It’s a win-win situation, and in these economical times, every dime counts.

So this summer make sure you go to a show or two. Concert season is almost in full swing and no matter what kind of show you are going to, you will enjoy these two spots, I promise.
Diplomacy slips

There is no better voice than Cuba's freedom fighters

JULIO MENACHE
Staff Writer

What do Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Cristina Kirchner of Argentina and Nicolas Sarkozy of France all have in common?

Each is a democratically-elected leader.

Each is the president of one of the wealthiest capitalist countries in the world.

Each has expressed interest in re-establishing diplomatic relations with the only communist government in the Western Hemisphere, Cuba.

Now the United States’ own Congressional Black Caucus, made up of African-American democratic legislators from various states, has joined the ranks of these leaders by not only meeting with Raul and Fidel Castro, but also committing their cardinal sin: refraining to meet with the much-repressed dissident leaders on the island.

When pressed about not meeting with democratic activists on the island, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), head of the caucus, noted she was not coming to set terms to negotiate, but merely to “talk and listen.”

Yet the voices of these dissidents have been long muffled by Fidel Castro’s communist dictatorship.

By not agreeing to “talk and listen” to the opposition and include the groups in their visit, these legislators have set the wrong note for future talks.

With the beginning of Obama’s presidency, the movement for better ties with Cuba has gained traction. Panama and El Salvador, two countries who had severed ties with the regime in the past, now look to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Latin American leaders also look to bring up U.S.-Cuba ties in the upcoming Summit of the Americas and call for the United States to end its embargo against the country and establish diplomatic ties.

Each leader who has come to Cuba has shown not only a great deal of hypocrisy, but also compliance of what is occurring on the island. Michelle Bachelet of Chile visited the island last February only to mention that the dissidents were not in her protocol plan.

What’s interesting to note is the fact that Bachelet herself once was a political prisoner and has actually seen the horrors of dictatorship first-hand under Augusto Pinochet.

Oswaldo Paya, arguably Cuba’s top dissident, described the plight of the opposition leaders best:

“We now stand alone because all Latin American countries have left [the dissidents] behind, all the way from Mexico to Chile and Argentina,” said Paya in a statement on his Web site.

If Rep. Lee and her colleagues had taken the time to move away from the protocol and taken the time to visit opposition leaders, they would have seen a diverse group of civil society that has fought to stay alive.

The fact is that the regime’s greatest crime is not allowing for any other forms of association outside the Communist Party. It is from this that each and every other human rights violation stems out, leading to censorship of opposing political parties and labor unions outside the Castro’s control, and the eventual jailing of anyone who stands a chance to oppose the regime.

If the Congressional Black Caucus would have met with dissidents, they would have found out that nearly 80 percent of political prisoners in Cuba are Afro-Cuban or dissidents, who use methods of non-violence, such as civil disobedience and hunger strikes, to gain wider attention to their plight, much like Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated in his struggle against segregation.

Yet, interestingly enough, as the world has been demanding dialogue between Cuba and the United States, it has already happened. Paya in 2005 instituted Program All Cubans, a simple survey that called for a dialogue between Cubans, both on the island and in exile, to list what type of government they wish to see in Cuba’s future.

The 16,000 Cubans and Cubans in exile have come to terms with seeing Cuba become more democratic, with free and fair elections with multiple parties. Greater freedom of the press, assembly, enterprise, as well as amnesty for all of Cuba’s political prisoners was also included.

Now Paya is looking to continue working on this “living document” by calling for another national dialogue to take place. The main objective of the dialogue would be to “guarantee respect, in law and in practice, for the civic, political and human rights of all Cuban citizens, and for their free participation in the process of democratic change and national reconciliation.”

“The [Cuban] people are the legitimate owners of this country, although they have their hands tied,” said Oswaldo Paya in a statement for the Hispano-American summit back in 1999.

“All the statesmen and personalities who visit us should realize that. You are welcome – but don’t ignore the owners of the house.”

If the United States is truly committed to establishing better ties with Cuba and truly talking only out of its issues, it must include dissidents in the conversation in order to secure that Cuba may someday see a democratically-elected government that secures in people’s human rights, both in writing and in practice.

Solutions to our flawed public school system do exist

ODETTE BARRIENTOS
Staff Writer

I’ve grown to really hate monopoly – the lack of choice in a country that threatens freedom. There is something very scary about companies that use their power to crush the competition. But what happens when there is no competition and there never has been?

This is exactly what is happening with the public education system in America today. Since the beginning of our kindergarten days, we have been told where we will go to school, what we will have for lunch and a myriad of other things.

For 13 years, everything is decided for you. Whether those decisions work for you, it doesn’t matter. Taxpayer dollars are going to pay for every wrong decision, whether you like it or not.

Unfortunately, American schools are government monopolies.

Some get the best out of public education; others are cheated out of a good deal. There are people in this country that graduate high school with barely enough skills to compete in the real world. Even worse, some just never graduate.

When compared on an international level, American kids fall behind and fade away to Asian and European counterparts. A 2003 study conducted by UNICEF took the averages from five different international education studies. Researchers ranked the United States No. 18 out of 24 nations in relative effectiveness of its educational system.

The UNICEF report found that educational success or failure is not directly linked to funding, citing that there is no clear link between student-to-teacher ratios and test results. Yet, I’ve always heard that more money needs to be put into public education.

“If money were the solution, the problem would already be solved. We’ve doubled per pupil spending, adjusting for inflation over the last 30 years, and yet schools aren’t better,” said Jay Greene, author of Education Myths.

Scores from the 2006 Program for International Student Assessment showed that U.S. 15-year-olds fell behind their peers from many industrialized countries.

“The average science score of U.S. students lagged behind those in 16 out of 30 countries. In math, only four countries had average scores lower than the U.S.”

What could possibly be wrong with our public education system?

“The solution is choice; getting rid of the government monopoly in the school system.”

Taxpayer dollars should follow children wherever they choose to go in the form of a voucher or education tax credits. This is not a radical proposal, similar bills geared for low-income students and students with low GPAs have been rejected in states such as Indiana, Missouri and South Carolina.

Given that children in the American public school system are assigned their schools, there is no competition. Schools don’t care to work harder and compete with each other. If this system adopted the strategies of higher education, colleges compete to be No. 1. Choice, more schools in America would be doing better.

We wouldn’t rank as low as we do on international levels.

Ultimately, American kids aren’t falling behind because they are “stupid” or “lazy”; they are victims of a flawed system. Getting rid of the existing monopoly and granting choices would be a step in the right direction. The child in America has indeed been left behind and there is no excuse for this.

If parents chose schools for their children, standards would be set and met on the threat of shutting down.

Choice would lead to competition.

School choice programs include free school choice programs, public school choice programs and charter schools. Choice already works in over 40 states and 1,600 independent school choice programs.

If parents chose schools for their children, standards would be set and met on the threat of shutting down.

The “D” and “F” schools would disappear because no one would want to send their children there.

Choice would lead to competition; competition would lead to better performance.

Attempts to promote choice in U.S. legislation have failed repeatedly in most states. In January 2006, Florida’s Supreme Court shut down “opportunity scholarships,” which was the state’s attempt at promoting competition. Other similar bills geared for low-income students and students with low GPAs have been rejected in states such as Indiana, Missouri and South Carolina.

Quick Facts:

• The Congressional Black Caucus was founded in 1976 in Washington, D.C.

• President Barack Obama recently eased travel restrictions for Cuba. Since 2004, Cuban Americans could only make three trips to the country per year.

• Raul Castro is Cuba’s current leader.

For 13 years, everything is decided for you. Whether those decisions work for you, it doesn’t matter. Taxpayer dollars are going to pay for every wrong decision, whether you like it or not.
Online video game streaming debuts

At the annual Game Developer’s Conference that took place March 24-27 in San Francisco, the world was given its introduction to OnLive, an online video game service that will supposedly render high-end PCs and consoles obsolete.

OnLive will stream videogames directly to your PC with essentially no latency while super servers do all the hard work for your PC. All that’s required is a one-megabyte browser plug-in and a monthly fee, with pricing yet to be announced. Ubisoft, EA, Take-Two and other publishers have already signed themselves on to the publish games for OnLive.

Crysis and Grand Theft Auto IV were among the titles demoed at the publish games for OnLive. have already signed themselves on to create games for OnLive. The specifics are still in the drawing board, but during the meeting the possibility of having a Student Government Association official, a college journalist and an athlete on the show were mentioned.

The group came from such diverse majors as chemistry, English, journalism, business and advertising. “Our hope is to show the human condition and structure of campus life and how it is reflected,” said Church during the meeting.

“We are not trying to make a High School Musical,” we want to express truths, but avoiding becoming a public service announcement.”

The show aims to produce twelve 20-minute episodes and will follow the lives, relationships and conflicts of nine diverse and dynamic characters, some of which will be interrelated.

The specifics are still in the drawing board, but during the meeting the possibility of having a Student Government Association official, a college journalist and an athlete on the show were mentioned.

Teamwork between such a diverse group of students trying to visualize the central themes and characters representative of a student body is one of the concerns of production. But during the meeting all future writers and directors were enthusiastic to offer ideas and work together.

“The challenge of a project like this is trying to speak for a community as diverse as a college campus,” said Sebastian Church, journalism major from University of Central Florida and the son of Phillip Church, who will be screenwriting for the show. “It is going to be difficult to conceive but the important thing is that we all collaborate.”

Dante Medina, a public relations freshman, believes it is important to feature characters that are often misunderstood.

“We should not only hold on to the usual roles, but we should also have characters, like loners, that often go unnoticed,” Medina said.

The show will start airing in the Fall of 2009 but during the summer the production crew will start scheduling episodes and hopes to produce one or two of the shows.

The episodes will be screened throughout the University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus during the Fall.

[min]
in the works for seven years, will be compressing these huge video games. Standard definition games will be delivered over a 1.5 megabits-per-second connection, and 720 pixels-per-inch definition will be delivered over a 5 megabits-per-second connection. Imagine playing streamed video games like you watch streamed videos on YouTube.

Is there enough Internet juice out there for OnLive to pump these HD games out? Will it really deliver on its promise of lag-free gaming via compression?

I’m not an Internet know-it-all, but I have my doubts. And what about online multiplayer? It’d be great to finally challenge my fellow Street Fighter IV players that don’t have the same console as I do. And the one-on-one gaming like that might work just fine via OnLive.

But what about playing Call of Duty: World at War? How will that work out with 16 players streaming data from the match simultaneously?

While OnLive has yet to prove itself, though, rumors are already circulating about the service setting itself to be bought out by Microsoft or rumors are already circulating about the service setting itself to be bought out by Microsoft or...
New hire creates recruiting buzz

**THOMAS, page 8**

exit in the Sun Belt Conference tournament.

Thomas’ recent stop with the New York Knicks does not sparkle the way his stellar career as a point guard did for the Detroit Pistons in the 1980s.

In September 2007, he and Madison Square Garden were sued for sexual harassment by employee Anucha Browne Sanders. MSG and the Knicks were ordered to pay $11.6 million for the incident, and Thomas was not found personally liable.

After recently enduring two losing seasons with the Knicks, Thomas said he is prepared to prove his worth in college basketball and defend his professional coaching career. Thomas preceded his period with the Knicks with three playoff appearances with the Indiana Pacers.

“If you’re speaking overall, I would say that I have had three successful seasons and two losing seasons,” Thomas said of his tenures with the Pacers and Knicks. “So I would say that I’m up.”

Thomas, who coped with criticism near the end of his stint with the Knicks, does not brush aside the assessments of critics.

“Critics are necessary, and not always wrong,” Thomas said. “Sometimes they are wrong, but that doesn’t mean that I cannot learn lessons from that. I have won at every level, and if you’re going to get to the top of the mountain at every level there will be a lot of people that criticize you.”

**RECRUITING BOOST**

The Golden Panther brass believes that Thomas has the ability to attract among the best recruits worldwide. The 12-time NBA All-Star is a popular figure for his prowess with the Pistons a few decades ago.

“In the last 48 hours, I have gotten more than 500 text messages and e-mails from potential student athlete basketball players,” Garcia said. “Obviously we will stay within the NCAA rules, but the kind of athletes that Isiah Thomas will attract will be the best anywhere not only in this state but the entire country.”

Garcia sees no boundaries to acquire future players.

“We are an international school, our team right now is composed of a bunch of international players. We are not going to leave any stone unturned,” Garcia said. “I’ve seen the way that he can recruit. I have always said that everything in life revolves around recruiting whether it’s a coach, a dean, a staff member, or a spouse. It’s all about recruiting.”

Starting guard expects to learn from new coach

**POINT GUARDS, page 7**

**CONSULTANT**

Art Alvarez is the president and CEO of the Amateur Athletic Union Miami Tropics; he coached Soto before he reached the Division I level. Alvarez said he consulted Thomas about Soto and other players he had worked with.

“We had a nice conversation. We wanted to make sure that we were on the same page,” Alvarez told The Beacon following the press conference on April 15. “Not only with Josue Soto and Freddy but the Martsavis Kee transfer from temple and J.C. Otero. I wanted to make sure he had a plan for those kids. He doesn’t have a plan, and we’re going to be working together for a long time.”

Alvarez thinks Thomas is the teacher Soto needs to improve himself as a point guard.

“Bringing Isiah in and giving him the opportunity to teach Soto and show him that he’s a point guard as well,” Alvarez said. “I think he’s the right coach for his development.”

**COACH ROUCO**

Former head coach Sergio Rouco was re-assigned on April 13 by Athletic Director Pete Garcia. His staff recruited Soto two years ago, but the starting point guard has yet to contact Rouco.

“I’m planning to, but I don’t think it’s a great time to talk to him,” Soto said. “I think he’s going to be a little hurt. I still think he’s a great coach.”

He did not know if any other player had spoken to Rouco following his removal from the head coach position.

Rouco coached at the University for five years and posted a 55-94 record.

Soto is looking ahead and wants his new coach to show him how to become a better defender and leader.

“He was a great defender, a great leader; that’s why he’s in the Hall of Fame,” Soto said. “If we’re going to be successful, I need to be the leader.”

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LEGEND UNVEILED

BRINGING FAME: Isiah Thomas was announced as the new head coach of the Golden Panthers’ basketball team on April 15. His five-year deal is worth approximately $1.1 million, according to Athletic Director Pete Garcia. Thomas compiled a 187-223 record during his five-year NBA coaching career.

Coach gives away first year’s salary, brings troubled past

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

When new FIU men’s basketball coach Isiah Thomas approached the podium at the U.S. Century Bank Arena for his introductory press conference April 15, one of the topics discussed were the terms of his five-year contract.

When Athletic Director Pete Garcia announced that the deal is worth approximately $1.1 million, concerns that the former NBA All-Star’s salary would be too expensive for the $22 million budget were answered.

But when Thomas said he would be donating his first-year’s salary worth to FIU, the Golden Panthers newest coach created a wave of bewilderment.

“I wanted to help this university,” Thomas said. “I didn’t want to be a financial burden.”

Garcia said that when Thomas learned about layoffs and budget cuts, he told University President Modesto A. Maidique that the school would not have to compensate him in his first season.

Garcia also remarked that the Athletics Department, in light of recent budget cuts, received a $5 million donation to upgrade the arena from the Capital Improvement Trust Funds.

“IT like rolling up my sleeves. I like taking some from the bottom and building it to the top. There’s a lot of risk in that and there is also a lot of reward in that. But that’s how I grew,” Thomas said. “I want to take FIU to the next level and I know it’s going to take a lot of hard work, but I’m willing to pay the price to do that.”

Garcia was hardly surprised by the gesture.

“GREAT HUMAN BEING”

“I know Isiah Thomas, and I guarantee you one thing. We are getting a great human being,” Garcia said. “He has been an exceptional husband for over 20 years. A great father, a great son.”

“I’ll let him talk about basketball, that’s his passion, but I will tell you one thing. Nobody will outwork this man.”

On the basketball side, however, Thomas takes over a program that has not had a winning season since 1999-00. The Golden Panthers are coming off a 13-20 campaign and an early season.

Players hope to learn from NBA Hall of Fame point guard

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

When Isiah Thomas, a Hall of Fame point guard, was announced as the head coach of the Golden Panthers’ basketball team, point guards Josue Soto and Nick Taylor were ready to start learning.

“I’m going to pick his brain all the time,” Taylor said. “He’s one of the top point guards of all time. I’m going to ask him questions, try to get as much knowledge as I can.”

Soto was the starting point guard last season and Taylor was his first backup. Thomas’ resume impressed the point guard duo, who did not expect to have Thomas as their new coach.

“I was surprised, but I was also excited,” Soto said. “Having somebody that has played at the highest level, makes you think, ‘What can he do to make you better?’”

Thomas comes into FIU with no experience coaching at the college level. As an NBA coach, he compiled a 187-223 during a five-year span. With the New York Knicks he went 56-108 before being fired in 2008.

Taylor hopes Thomas’ national championship in 1981, NBA championship in 1990 and 13-year professional career will provide him with unique insight.

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Looking for direction: Point guards Josue Soto and Nick Taylor (left, right respectively) both hope their new Hall of Fame point guard of a coach could help develop their skills.