Club offers charitable spring break alternative

MELISSA CACERES
Contributing Writer

For next spring break, Robert Tassy plans on spending time under the tropical skies of Costa Rica. Yet instead of soaking up some sun or relaxing in a five-star hotel, he will be saving the environment.

“Tassy, a site leader for the FIU community service organization Alternative Breaks, is preparing to take a small group of students abroad to the Central American country hoping to make the region more eco-friendly.”

“Don’t want people to go just to travel,” said Tassy, a junior majoring in economics. “We want to really get them into the issue.”

Formerly known as Alternative Spring Breaks, ABS is an organization that sends college students abroad to participate in community service projects that focus on specific issues ranging from animal rights to poverty.

The club, based in FIU, is a chapter of a national organization called Break Away. In its 16th year, ABS has grown into the University’s largest service organization with around 500 applications coming in annually from students wishing to get involved in the many philanthropic projects that are offered.

Twenty-two projects have been finalized for this year, each having about eight to 10 participants and two site leaders.

Those who wish to participate in the program are allowed to choose an issue that they feel passionate about. They are then placed into a specific group that will inform them where they will travel.

By having students decide the path the trip would like to pursue first, the organization separates those who are truly interested in the community service aspect of the program from those who are attracted to it for the traveling aspect of it.

SOFIAL PVC-AB, page 2

Golden Panthers obtain first victory of 2009 season behind strong offense

Commentary: The Golden Panthers obtain first victory of 2009 season behind strong offense

By association@fiu.edu

Soccer fans will get to score a goal at the bay.

AT THE BAY

Golden Panthers obtain first victory of 2009 season behind strong offense

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2009

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SGC-BBC Web site provides incorrect numbers

SGA, page 1

SGC-BBC Advisor Rafael Zapata, said the comments were “unfortunate,” and that he would be disappointed if one of the BBC members said such a thing. Johnson suggested that if the funds were centralized into one campus, the University’s services would improve. “We would have more police, we would have a 24-hour library, and more places to eat,” Johnson said. He later qualified his statement as a hypothetical question on viability. One example he gave was the lack of identity FIU will carry.

He said that in the future he might meet an FIU alumni on the streets and, “then I find they are an alumn from BBC, I have nothing in common with them. I have nothing to talk about. What do you talk about? What a nice lake you guys have?”

MMC currently has 32,255 students. BBC has 2,906 students, enrolled, including Pines Center. MMC Finance members vented their frustrations when it was suggested that the BBC Finance Committee had more money in its coffers. Compromiser Morales, who advises the committee, however, said she would have to “double check” such numbers.

According to a spreadsheet of emoluments provided to Student Media by SGC-BBC, the amount of payment to SGA officers equals the amount stipulated by the constitution. In some cases, they get paid less than the constitutionally allowed amount. Working off an outdated SGC-BBC Web site, the MMC committee concluded that the BBC committee had a $40,000 budget while MMC only had $25,000.

The MMC committee found that, if based on representation, MMC should get $52,000 and BBC $13,000 of the combined $65,000 allocated to the finance committees. “Even if they have 8,000 students,” said Morales when explaining that some BBC students actually spend some of the time at MMC. “In ratio to how many are here rather than there, they should get point five, not even a whole – half.”

Student Media found that the amount the BBC Finance Committee has is $26,524.

Neinstein said that the SGC-BBC Web site is outdated because Student Affairs made them take down their newly-developed Web site. “We had everything up and running,” he said. “SGC-MMC thought it looked like ours. We are supposed to complete another one not compete with each other.”

Under the Florida State Sunshine laws, the Finance Committee meeting is considered a public meeting, and anything said in that meeting is public record. Neinstein and Zapata’s comments were gathered the Friday after the meeting.

SGC-MMC advisor Jose Toscano could not be reached for comment.

Students offer helping hand to communities in need

SGA, page 1

“One may go to Jacuzzis and five-star hotels,” Tassy said. “When they do it for the wrong reasons, they don’t get the experience.”

Students stay in modest quarters, such as hostels, to make the experience as economical and humble as possible; thus being able to use their funds toward the communities they are providing aid for.

Junior Jennifer Almanzar, a nursing major, found out about all through her Freshman Experience course. She participated in two different trips to the Dominican Republic and helped disadvantaged children throughout the area. Almanzar, whose parents are also Dominican, said the experience was “a chance to make a difference.”

She mentioned that the relationships with the participants are different from those of the average friendships she sees on campus.

“It’s more of a ‘we’re making a change together’ kind of bond,” Almanzar said. “It’s changing everything about the things you see.”

One of this year’s co-directors, Louis Rodriguez, a junior majoring in public administration, has traveled across the country to cities like Chicago, Ill. to help refugees adjust to life in the U.S. and Blacksburg, Va. to deal with poverty among white populations. He also has seen changes in the students after coming back from certain projects.

“We’ve had people who come back from animal rights trips as vegetarians,” Rodriguez said.

Recently, aB has been working to create more domestic trips within the U.S. since it makes it financially easier to send more students. aB receives most of its funds from the Student Government Association along with donations and fundraising that comes from the participants through activities like operating concession stands at Landshark Stadium.

Through these funds, aB has been able to send provisions to affected areas during the Sept. 11 attacks as well as to Hurricane Katrina victims.

For more information about, visit: aB-breaks.com.

Attendees disagree with ban

SMOKE-FREE, page 1

“I feel that these social enforcers seem to think that they are morally higher than all these smokers and can just go around freely and boss us around rudely,” Lawrence said.

Freshman Jarett Loglia, music education major and smoker, said during the forum that a ban like this would hurt the Universi-
ty’s goal of becoming “less of a commuter campus.”

“If I found out that FIU was a smoke-free campus, I would never have lived on campus in the first place,” Loglia said.

SGC-MMC President Anthony Rionda was also in attendance to hear students’ feedback.

Though Rionda took a neutral posi-
tion regarding the issue, he said that if students are here to do anything other than earning a degree, they should “check their priorities.”

“If you don’t want to live on campus because there is a ban on smoking, that’s a personal opinion, I personally disagree,” Rionda said. “But let’s look at the positive things, you’re here to get a degree, you are not here to smoke.”

Rionda told Student Media that he did not want to take a position on the matter and that he doesn’t want this to be a “divi-
sive” issue.

“We did hear some really good feedback from the students,” Thompson said after the forum. Thompson plans to put together a report with the feedback collected at this forum and submit it to the University Health Task Force.

This forum is part one of a three-part series to be held at the beginning of each month during the semester.

The next Residential Life forum will be held on Nov. 4 and will address students’ concerns about parking and traffic at the University.

Director of Parking and Transportation, Bill Foster, will be in attendance to answer students’ questions.
Baby boomers go to class

Courses cover current events, art, language

LAURA DE LA FE
Contributing Writer

Unlike most students at the University, Leonard Gonzalez goes to class, but not to pursue a degree. He doesn’t even earn any class credit.

“The person that’s lived a full life has a book in them, that’s why I’m taking the creative writing course, because everyone has an interesting story to tell,” Gonzalez said.

Like Gonzalez, there are a few students over the age of 50 walking around the Biscayne Bay Campus, and most of them belong to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which provides non-credit learning opportunities for adults age 50 and over. The institute offers intellectually stimulating courses, according to its Web site.

The institute currently has about 1,000 members, with 250 of those currently enrolled in at least one course. However, this number tends to fluctuate, especially between Thanksgiving and the winter months, the peak seasons for OLLI, according to Clara Barman, the program coordinator.

This is the time where seasonal members, those who live out of town, come to Florida and take the courses.

“The goal of the institute is to serve the community, and bring FIU out to the community with opportunities for students to expand their studies and growth,” Barman said.

The institute was originally founded at the University in 1977 as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute because of a donation from the Bernard Osher Foundation, a foundation founded in 1977 that provides scholarship funding to colleges and universities across the U.S. with special attention to re-entry students, according to its Web site.

The University runs one of the 122 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes across the country. The institute is based at BCC in Academic II Room 130, and it is part of the University College, a division that offers classes for professionals and adult learners wanting to continue their education.

The University College offers classes online, in the evenings, and on weekends to fit an adult learner’s schedule.

Although the institute’s general students are people age 50 and over, they accept students of any age and background. The only requirement is a thirst for learning, according to Ellie Browner, OLLI community outreach liaison.

Course instructors are experts in their respective fields and include community leaders, educators and FIU faculty.

OLLI courses cover topics such as the arts, current events and language. Courses include the Current Events Forum, which was designed to help students understand and discuss the current situation and the economy of the country; Floral Design, which takes place at a Miami Gardens florist shop; and Creative Writing, which is taught by a winning author, professional editor and journalist Hindi Diamond.

The classes offered at the institute depend on different factors, Barman said. Students often make suggestions about the type of classes they would like to take.

Some of these suggestions come from student focus groups and surveys taken around the end of the semester, which give OLLI staff feedback about the institute. Other courses are known as the “tried and true,” and are offered on a regular basis due to their popularity.

“As a student, I was very pleased with what I saw. There are a wide variety of courses, and the staff is really conscious of what students need,” said Browner, who is also a former student at the institute. “People start making a network of friends – a community of people taking courses.”

In order to start taking classes, students must register with the institute and pay an annual fee. There are two types of annual membership fees.
Unnecessary smoking ban will disenfranchise students, toss away adequate rules

ROMNEY MANASSA
Staff Writer

For a man in his 80s, Pope Benedict XVI is certainly energetic. On Oct. 4, he held a high-profile meeting with bishops to discuss Africa and its humanitarian crisis. It’s not the first time he’s sounded the call with regard to the continent. He’s visited over a dozen counties, met with political and religious world leaders and held public masses for thousands.

It’s no surprise that Benedict seems as influential as he is; as an irreligious person, I can concede that he has as much stock in global and social issues as any world leader.

So it was surprising to hear of the controversy surrounding the Pope’s proactive take on environmentalism. Echoing the sentiments of his political and scientific counterparts, Pope Benedict has called for the world to be more environmentally responsible and to curb overconsumption.

This is hardly the first time he’s taken up such causes. Like his predecessor, John Paul II, Pope Benedict has rallied numerous social and humanitarian issues, even going so far as to critique American-style capitalism and its “false promises.” In fact, the Catholic Church as a whole hasn’t taken to placing on only the usual religious fare, such as abortion, premarital sex and gay marriage. It’s officially pro-U.N., anti-death penalty, an opponent of arms-trading and—yes—environmentalist.

As odd and perhaps perturbing as it might be for a religious figurehead to take up traditionally “non-religious” issues, it’s hardly breaking the mold.

Besides, whatever one’s thoughts on religion or the church, we should maintain a critical eye: the Pope maintains enough influence to make a considerable difference, and in a world with so many daunting issues, every voice counts.

He invoked the importance of dialogue and human rights in a time when Cold War tensions were high. He bridged the divide between Catholicism and other denominations, and even improved historically strained relations with Judaism.

I do not agree with everything Pope Benedict has to say, nor am I defending every cause he has taken up. Like any of us, his opinions are varied and complex—but he has every right to take up these issues just as we have every reason to seriously consider them.

Pope’s views still relevant in politics

ARCHITECT LE CUBERUSI said, “A house is a machine for living in. If students, we see the buildings across campus as four walls to have classes in, nothing more. What we don’t take into consideration is how these buildings can be something else, incorporating 21st century “green” technology. The Nursing and Health Sciences building is a prime example of this. HOK Architects, the designing firm for the building, says the NHS building will be “one of the most technologically advanced buildings.” I disagree; it’s just another typical building on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus.

No effort was made to make it truly sustainable.

The NHS building is oriented with its largest facades facing east and west, and would have benefited greatly if solar panels had been placed there. Instead, this orientation will only cause the building to heat up, needing more electricity and impacting the environment even more.

Architecturally, saying that Miami is a natural fertile and primary energy cost of most buildings is air conditioning. Wind could have been used as a great resource for cooling the building. Radiant slab cooling can lower the costs of cooling by 40 percent.

Even when we look at the NHS building right now, we see no features of it being an environmentally-friendly building in stark contrast to the University’s aims of a “greener” campus. The only “green” element the building will display to students is the “green” roof, which will have grass.

The new NHS building, like most buildings on campus, will make us feel like we’re in a prison cell for 50 minutes—just you, the teacher and a door. Too bad it’s already constructed.

OPINION PIECE

"Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future."

The Beacon - 4

www.fiu.am
Monday, October 12, 2009

EXILE THE BURGER KING NEXT?

When dealing with complex problems, the simplest solution is often the most problematic.

So it is with the University proposal to ban smoking on FIU campuses by May 2010. While it has been widely accepted for some time that the long-term effects of smoking are overwhelmingly negative, and that prolonged exposure to secondhand smoke carries serious health risks, the proposal to ban smoking altogether is unwarranted.

Current University policy mandates that smokers are prohibited from lighting up within 20 feet of a University building.

This rule was imposed initially based on the assumption, based on scientific data, that secondhand smoke can be inhaled in harmful quantities within such a radius. Non-smokers outside the 20 foot radius were believed to be safe from serious harm.

Yet currently, non-smoke cigarettes much closer to University buildings, endan- gering not only themselves but others around them.

This problem, however, can be reme- died in a few easy steps that fall far short of a University-wide ban. Actually placing garbage cans with ash trays 20 feet away from buildings rather than right next to them would go a long way toward ensuring that smokers abide by the current rules, for instance.

The Beacon, like most other organizations on campus, believes that smoking is a terrible habit that should be curbed. But realistically, the terrible effects of noxious tobacco smoke.

The Beacon opposes an arbitrary

current rules, not impose new ones for publicity’s sake.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Building lacks green facet

Juan Manuel
Senior Architecture

After hearing much debate over the new smoke-free campaign FIU is planning to imple- ment, I felt the need to say something.

I agree entirely that smoking is a hazard to everyone’s health.

With that said, I do not agree with the campaign itself because I think FIU has inadequately informed us of its 20- foot no-smoking policy near buildings.

I have attended FIU for over two years and have never heard of any such rule until now. Now we are penalizing the smokers who were not aware of this rule? FIU on the contrary has visu- ally allowed smoking because of its place- ment of ash trays along building sides and lack of no-smoking signs.

It would be wiser for FIU to create designated smoking areas in order to accommodate both smoking and non-smoking students and faculty.

Fair is fair, FIU has an obligation to all its students regardless of whether they smoke.

Martha Rosa
Senior English

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"Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world’s attention and given its people hope for a better future."
For more than 15 years, the Women’s Center at FIU has worked to provide services for both male and female students on campus. The center began in 1994 after a proposal was made by members of the faculty and staff to provide a program that focused on women’s growth and development, gender issues, body image, assertiveness and educational and career decisions. The center provides a wide array of services and events geared toward educating and inspiring women, according to the center’s director, Suzanne Onorato. All the services provided are available at both the Modesto Maidique Campus and the Biscayne Bay Campus.

“The Women’s Center aims to provide female students on campus with opportunities for professional and personal development and seeks to help them recognize their full potential and become self-empowered,” said Sandi Colquitt, a student and program assistant at the Women’s Center.

The center’s director feels that she has a strong sense of purpose relating to her work. “I believe that I was put on this Earth to help women and men recognize the changes that can be put into place to achieve equality in society,” Onorato said.

As director, she provides wisdom and guidance while helping students make decisions that directly affect their organization, she said. The students involved in the Women’s Center are given the opportunity to share their ideas and incorporate them into the plans for events. In Onorato’s view, the center is not just for the students, it is, in part, run by them.

Among the center’s projects is the mentoring program, which offers 42 female students the services of a mentor. The mentors are alumnae and staff members. The women are able to meet as often as they like and services are provided to help facilitate that.

Another program offered by the center is the Sisterhood Retreat, an event that involves a diverse group of 40 women and is designed to help them build relationships with others as well as engage in activities that promote self-reflection and self-improvement.

Women seeking information on Christian or non-Christian beliefs while letting students make decisions that directly affect the organization, she said. The students provided are available at both the Modesto Maidique Campus and the Biscayne Bay Campus.

“The Women’s Center aims to provide female students on campus with opportunities for professional and personal development.”

Sandi Colquitt, Program Assistant
Women’s Center

“After the end of the retreat, I felt as if I’d made a whole group of new friends,” said program assistant, Sarah Paulick.

Take Back the Night helps to promote awareness about sexual violence. During this event, students provide information and statistics about sexual violence. The event includes speakers and information stations with prevention and self-defense tips.

Strong Women, Strong Girls is a national program that is geared toward helping girls and young women become strong women in their future, according to Onorato. The program includes about 20 FIU students who mentor 150 girls at 10 different sites in the Miami-Dade area. The students mentor children between the third and fifth grades at middle schools and community schools. The 10-week program is offered as an after school program and its curriculum focuses on building “strong women.” The program also aims to build self-esteem and self-confidence within its participants, according to Onorato.

The center also holds annual conferences that are geared toward female students. The Women Who Lead Conference focuses on women who are leading in different aspects of their careers. Professional women come to FIU and share their experiences and how they were able to become successful in their field. The conference includes a main speaker as well as discussions and workshops geared toward creating more successful women in the work force.

Women’s Success Forum is a forum held every month where women celebrate their “inner success,” which the center’s director defined as people’s innermost feelings and strongly held personality traits – what makes every person unique.

Though the title of the event may make it seem as if it is meant exclusively for women, it is open to men as well. At the forum, a topic related to women’s issues is presented and the event includes activities and dialogue relating to the topic, which is usually intended to be controversial.

For more information on these events and the Center in general, visit its Web site at women@fiu.edu or www.women@fiu.edu or 305-348-1506 (MMC) or 305-919-5359 (BBC).

Cru holds monthly meetings that talk about what they feel are important issues: drinking, sex, peer pressure and, of course, God. The group recently held its first series entitled “Sex, God and College.”

The series included an in-depth discussion on pre-marital sex and the reasons why the group advocates abstinence.

“It was really interesting because it looked at sex through a guy’s perspective but the Christian perspective as well,” Vazquez said.

Along with their meetings, Cru holds social and spiritual events on campus. They organize weekly Bible study sessions at the FIJI house on campus as part of their new outreach program aimed at international students, students in the Greek system, and the residence halls.

Religion is the backbone of the group but not what it’s completely made up of. “The one thing that I think is most important is to take away from the group is that it’s not about religion, it’s about relationships,” Vazquez said.

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“It was really interesting because it looked at sex through a guy’s perspective but the Christian perspective as well,” Vazquez said.

Along with their meetings, Cru holds social and spiritual events on campus. They organize weekly Bible study sessions at the FIJI house on campus as part of their new outreach program aimed at international students, students in the Greek system, and the residence halls.

Religion is the backbone of the group but not what it’s completely made up of. “The one thing that I think is most important is to take away from the group is that it’s not about religion, it’s about relationships,” Vazquez said.

Group promotes Christianity on campus

ADRIANA RODRIGUEZ Contributing Writer

For both religious and non-religious students, the information on Christianity at FIU is there at least one club on campus eager to provide it.

Campus Crusade for Christ, an international Christian ministry for college students, has groups on 12 different college campuses across South Florida including FIU. Here, the group goes by Cru@FIU.

The group is open to all students, Christian or not. “One of our international students, he’s Muslim, but he’s just interested. We have Hindu kids coming to our meetings just to sit in. We are a Christian group, and we’re not going to compensate that but anyone who’s interested or wants to come, you’re welcome,” said Katrina Varquez, a sophomore majoring in nursing and a part of Cru’s leadership committee. “Cru’s mission is for every student on campus to know someone who’s truly following Jesus Christ. If they ever have any questions, they know someone. So, we’re here to help students – Christians and non-Christians – people who have questions about God and my life, and basically to answer any questions in general. It’s not just limited to Christians.”

The ministry is designed to help students with their personal relationship with God.

“We are about helping students across South Florida learn how they can know God personally, be built up in their relationships with God, and be able to continue to grow and share with others for a lifetime,” according to the Campus Crusade for Christ’s official Web site.

The club tries to promote familial bonds among its members.

“Being in Cru is like having a family there for you through thick and thin, one that doesn’t judge you for your mistakes but gives you all the support and love you’ll need to make it through,” said sophomore Catherine Flores, an undeclared major.

Brian Abadia, a junior advertising major said the joining process was a very spiritual experience for him: “I didn’t choose to be in Cru, I guess they reached me, and I’m completely sure that that was God’s plan. Also, I guess that as soon as he knew it was time to come to every meeting, I started identifying myself with all the topics that they were talking about. I realized that everything was something real and practical in my life, that God was real and practical in my life.”

You can find more information on how to join Campus Crusade for Christ on www.cruinmiami.com or by joining their Facebook group, Cru@FIU.
The Beacon – Monday, October 12, 2009

**Useless applications still often mildly entertaining**

**TECH, page 5**

I need to know that if I am bored one day and want to see how old I am in dog years I can log on to the app store and low and behold there is the “DogYears” app. Though I will laugh on to the app store and low and behold there is the “DogYears” app. Though I will laugh.

“I help recruit volunteers for different Republican campaigns and create online groups to encourage students to join the campus campaign movement.”

**College Republicans work for ‘government restraint’**

**ADRIAN ESPINOSA Contributing Writer**

Even in a time when the Democratic Party controls both houses of Congress and the White House, the FIU College Republicans are still championing the conservative cause.

Passing out bumper stickers, fliers and buttons, they work to promote their preferred candidates, especially during election season. The club is bound together by a shared commitment to government restraint, according to the club’s president, Nick Autiello, an international relations major and president of the club.

The club is bound together by a shared commitment to government restraint, according to Autiello.

This is the mantra that most Republicans adopt, according to Autiello, and it is this belief that he feels embodies the spirit of the club. Every so often, guest speakers come to events and students get a chance to interact with prominent Republican figures in local government, he said.

Sometimes elected officials come in to give a speech and other times candidates running for office in an upcoming election do the talking. The club is also active in helping members receive congressional internship opportunities, giving them the chance to construct a network of connections to important government officials, according to Autiello.

During the 2008 presidential elections, they accepted tickets in the Graham Center for registered students to vote. At the same time, they told students about Senator McCain’s platform and the republican platform for America. The current vice president of the club, broadcast journalism and political science major, Maria Concha is currently working for Republican candidate for Florida’s Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater and plans on assisting Mario Diaz-Balart in his campaign for re-election to the U.S. House. She is proud of the group’s efforts on behalf of different political causes.

“We help recruit volunteers for different Republican campaigns and create online groups to encourage students to join the campus campaign movement.”

**PREKSHA MEDITATION**

Have a positive start to your week with this event!

WHERE: 4 p.m.
WHERE: GC 314

**BAHAMIAN STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

Get in touch with Bahamian culture with this meeting.

WHERE: 3 p.m.
WHERE: GC 305

**TANGO CLASSES**

Learn how to sway smoothly with these classes!

WHERE: 7 p.m.
WHERE: GC Pit

**FREE CUBA FOUNDATION**

Learn how you can help free Cuba at this meeting!

WHERE: 12 p.m.
WHERE: GC Pit

**CIRCUS @ CURRIE CHURCHILL**

Enjoy this weekly magic show today!

WHERE: 10 a.m.
WHERE: GC 343

**ITALIAN FILM FEST**

Watch epic films from this country!

WHERE: 7 p.m.
WHERE: GC Pit

**TOTALS OF COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS**

Thousands of college textbooks – Used or New – Less Time and the Cost.

**CATHOLIC STUDENT UNION**

Get spiritual with this meeting!

WHERE: 6:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 325

**WOMEN’S STUDIES STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Hear this lecture and get engaged!

WHERE: 12 p.m.
WHERE: GC 343

**JAM AT MAM**

Enjoy happy hour with music and art!

WHERE: 5 p.m.
WHERE: MAM

**COMPILED BY MARTA LIZON**

Have an event you want featured? Send an email to marlizoe14@hotmail.com
IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES, WE HAVE OVER 100,000 MILES OF COASTLINE TO FIND THEM.

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Text “Ready” to 36638 and download the mobile Coast Guard game.”
Players step up while Hilton injures knee

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

On his first throw of the game, FIU quarterback Paul McCall found Greg Ellingson down the middle of the Hilltopper logo for a 32-yard gain.

On his second attempt, McCall tossed a dart to Coll Anderson for a first down in Western Kentucky's red zone.

In just his third try, he capped the opening drive with a 19-yard pass to Ellingson for a touchdown. It took less than three minutes for FIU to get on the board in its opening drive.

It was that type of day for McCall. In a chilly evening in Western Kentucky, McCall was 14-of-22 and recorded 280 yards and two touchdowns to lead FIU to a 37-20 win against the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers (0-5, 0-1) on Oct. 10 at L.T. Smith Stadium. The senior signal caller completed seven consecutive passes to start the game, tying Josh Padrick for the third most consecutive completions ever by an FIU quarterback.

The Golden Panthers scored a season-high in points despite losing star sophomore T.Y. Hilton to a knee injury in the first quarter. Hilton left the game and was fitted for a knee brace after catching a pass from McCall and landing awkwardly.

"It’s one of those things where somewhere along the line every team needs that gut check," said Coach Mario Cristobal. "When our best playmaker goes down is their team going to fold, or are other guys going to step up. I think that’s the sign of a team that has the capability of going on and becoming a champion."

McCall was not alone. Ty Frierzon and Greg Ellingson combined for eight catches for 198 yards and two touchdowns to provide enough aerial firepower for the offense, and Daunte Owens had career highs in carries, yards and touchdowns to lead an efficient running offense. He finished with 86 yards on 17 carries with two rushing touchdowns.

"BEAUTIFUL"

The Golden Panthers ran for a season-best 206 yards as a team, led by Owens and Darriet Perry. FIU pounded WKU with a heavy dose of running as the team rushed 49 times with a healthy 4.2 yards per rush.

"It’s beautiful; it’s a tribute to what those guys up front have been doing all year," McCall said. "It’s no surprise. We have been trying to establish the run all year."

The Golden Panthers entered the game last in the Sun Belt Conference in rushing offense. Daunte Owens had career highs in carries, yards and touchdowns to lead an efficient running offense. He finished with 86 yards on 17 carries with two rushing touchdowns.

"It feels really good, knowing that I can rely on my teammates," Hilton said. "The win means a lot with everything that’s going on in the Sun Belt right now."

The Golden Panthers will face Troy (3-2, 2-0 Sun Belt) on Oct. 17. Hilton’s status will become clear this week when he undergoes an MRI on his knee.

"Adversity is going to happen all the time," said linebacker Toronto Smith. "We’re just tired of losing. We made up our minds that we were going to dominate and now we have to take that same mind-set next week when Troy comes to our house."

HOT HANDS: Greg Ellingson catches a touchdown in the first half against Western Kentucky on Oct. 10. Ellingson led the team in catches and yards without T.Y. Hilton.

FIU at home next week for the biggest matchup of the season.

TEAM WINS, BUT DEFENSE MUST IMPROVE

Now that is more like it.

It took five games, but the Golden Panthers finally got into the "W" column this season.

FIU rudely welcomed Western Kentucky University to the Sun Belt Conference with a 37-20 victory in the Hilltoppers’ first conference game.

Even playing most of the contest without T.Y. Hilton, who only touched the ball twice before leaving the game with a right knee injury in the first quarter, the Golden Panthers enjoyed their best offensive day of the season, scoring in every quarter and racking up 486 yards of total offense.

Despite FIU’s dominance on offense and impressive play against the pass, the defense’s biggest hole has yet to be filled with the Hilltoppers rushing for 263 yards and 266 yards per carry average. Let’s take a look at what the Golden Panthers did right to earn their first win of 2009.

BALANCED ATTACK

This was the type of day that was expected from this team when it came into the season talking about contending for a conference title and making a bowl game for the first time.

The defensive line finally got some pressure on the opposing team’s quarterback, freshman Kawuan Jakes, sacking him twice and forcing an interception into the hands of Toronto Smith.

The running game also got going, with 206 yards as a team, including an 85-yard day from Darriet Perry. More importantly was the impressive running of senior Daunte Owens, who rushed for a team leading 86 yards on 17 carries with two touchdowns. Owens is a slightly larger back than Perry and freshman Darrian Mallary, and he has shown glimpses of his abilities when healthy.

That was the running game FIU was looking for all season, and Coach Mario Cristobal and offensive coordinator Bill Legg’s patience finally paid off with the big game on the ground, which opened up the offense and allowed Paul McCall to look deep for 280 yards and two touchdowns, including a 65-yard toss to Greg Ellingson and a 40-yard touchdown catch for Ty Frierzon.

NOT ALL POSITIVE

The Golden Panthers were still gashed on the ground once again. Jakes, the mobile freshman quarterback, was held to just a 2.8 yard per carry average, but the Hilltoppers still managed to exploit the Golden Panthers’ biggest weakness.

Credit must be given where it is due, and FIU deserves credit for this win. FIU, favored for the first time this year, was supposed to beat WKU, and it did in convincing fashion.

However, FIU had an opportunity to shore up its defense against an inferior foe and still gave up huge numbers on the ground. The team has a week to solve the issue before the defending conference champion Trojans visit FIU at home next week for the biggest matchup of the season.

FIU    WKU

First Downs 23 20
Rushes-Yards 49-206 43-263
Passing 280 118
Comp-Att-Int 14-22-0 16-26-1
Return Yards 124 127
Punts Avg. 3-41.3 7-43.7
Penalties-Yards 8-51 9-81
Fumbles-Lost 1-1 1-1
Time of Possession 28:24 31:36

RUSHING — FIU: Perry 21-185, Owens 17-86, Mallary 6-23, WREJ 5, Ramey 9-103, Booker 8-64, Jakes 16-81
PASSING — FIU: McCall 14-22-0-118
RECEIVING — FIU: Ellingson 5-132, Hilton 1-31, Frierson 3-66, Martinez 1-17, Anderson 1-16, WREJ 1-23, Doyle 3-41, Ookhae 3-24, Sheppard 2-13

NATIONAL TRIMMER