New alliance helps find jobs

MEENA RUPANI
Staff Writer

With Florida’s current job market and the difficulty it has shown college graduates looking for employment, the FIU Alumni Association has teamed up with an organization called Career Campaigns that specializes in assisting qualified candidates on their search for a stable job.

“Florida has the fourth worst job market in the country but we are hoping to see hiring beginning at the end of this year,” said Dan Nelson, the founder and CEO of Career Campaigns.

The organization, which also shares a partnership with the University of South Florida, believes their assistance is necessary during this tough economic time to help those who are struggling to find long-term career opportunities.

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Although having both a

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US airport rules not enforced

ERIN MCCLEAN
Associated Press

On the first day of what was supposed to be tighter screening ordered by the U.S. for airline passengers from certain countries, some airports around the world conceded Monday they had not cracked down enough.

The United States demanded more careful screening for people who are citizens of, or are flying from, 14 nations deemed security risks. But enforcement of the U.S. rules appeared spotty.

“Everything is the same. There is no extra security,” said an aviation official in Lebanon, one of the countries on the list. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The Obama administration ordered the changes after what authorities say was a failed attempt by a Nigerian man to blow up a jetliner bound from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day.

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration said the enhanced screening techniques would include full-body pat-downs, searches of carry-on bags, full-body scanning and explosive-detection technology.

In Nigeria, one of the nations on the U.S. list for additional security, there were long lines on the first day of the new rules. At the airport in the capital of Lagos, Mune Omoigui, a 24-year-old student, said she had been told to show up more than seven hours ahead of time for a flight to Atlanta.

A Nigerian official pledged that everyone

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Although having both a
‘No visible changes’ in international security

Replacement dean chosen

Jorge Valens
News Director

The University has appointed a new interim dean of the Graduate School for the current semester.

Kevin O’Shea, professor for the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, will be replacing outgoing Dean George Walker.

Having been a part of the University since 1991, O’Shea served as the as Chair of the Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate and as the director of the graduate program for the chemistry and biochemistry department according to a University e-mail sent to faculty and staff by Interim Provost Douglas Wartzok.

The e-mail added that during his tenure, he “has mentored 52 undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and visiting faculty in his research laboratory.”

O’Shea’s research focuses on applying and analyzing the impact of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and its effects on humans.

“His goal is to understand the basic reactions between ROS and important biological molecules in association with specific human disorders and diseases,” Wartzok said.

He added that O’Shea’s work also seeks to investigate “the reactions of ROS with organic pollutants and toxins as potential water treatment applications.”

University Graduate School will commence in the Spring. Wartzok closed his statement by asking University faculty and staff to welcome O’Shea and “assist him in his duties to continue the positive trajectory of graduate education at FIU.”

Union aids both parties

ALUMNI, page 1

commercial and profile seems unorthodox, Nelson explains that "what employers see, hear and feel indicate whether they feel going to hire you." Nelson has been working alongside Duane Wiles, the executive director of Alumni Relations at FIU, to get the word out to students of this new partnership and what it will do for the student community.

"We informed alumni via e-mail and social networking sites (i.e. LinkedIn, My Panther Connection and Facebook) and recently sent a press release," Wiles said.

Nelson was also featured in two workshops held at FIU describing the "Art of Marketing," a field that Nelson has been a part of for 30 years.

Students also voiced their opinions on whether or not they would be willing to use the services of the Alumni Association and Career Campaigns to assist them following graduation.

"I think that the Association could help me network, not necessarily find me a job, but connect me to other graduates with different experiences," said Jennifer Fuentes, a senior majoring in political science and philosophy.

Jessica Torgas, a junior majoring in English, was also eager to learn about the new partnership and how it can help her achieve her career goal.

“Yes I would definitely be open to the Alumni Association assisting me in finding a job. It won’t hurt. I am a little nervous, especially since I want to become a teacher,” Torgas said.

Another student, Malena Torres, would also be open to any assistance she can find after graduation.

"I think that the Alumni Association could help me in finding a job or at least in guiding me in my career path," said Torres, a senior majoring in international relations. "I’m really worried about finding a job after graduation; the job market is really competitive and the economic situation is not helping either.”

So far, the agreement between the two organizations has just begun; however, the workshops have commanded a great turnout, according to both Wiles and Nelson.

According to Nelson, the employers who choose to use the Career Campaigns services are required to pay a fee to the company.

However, Career Campaigns will be returning a percentage of this revenue back to the Alumni Association.

“The alumni receive a job and are allowed to use the Career Campaigns’ services free of charge, also the association turns a profit," Nelson said.

Both Wiles and Nelson are still hopeful that they will generate employability for FIU alumni.

If not, the agreement can be terminated at any time, according to Wiles.

"We are like the Schwab and eHarmony rolled into one and we hope to place candidates starting at the end of this year. So far we have only a few candidates in the system but it is still too early in the alliance," Nelson said.
SJMC debuts new Hispanic Communications program

LAURA DE LA FE
Staff Writer

With Hispanics now comprising approximately 16 percent of the U.S. population, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication has created a new program allowing the fastest growing minority segment in the U.S. access to research and distinguished speakers that will prepare them to communicate with their community.

The Hispanic Communication Studies will address issues that relate to the Hispanic community in the United States. Its directors expect it to eventually become one of the “premier thought-leadership institutes” in the U.S. Hispanic community.

“IT makes sense to establish this program at FIU, since Miami is home to the most important Hispanic broadcast-media outlets as well as a large and diverse Hispanic community,” said Teresa Ponte, chair of the Department of Journalism and Broadcasting.

“We have become a feeder school to the news media as well as to public relations and advertising agencies recruiting Hispanics to address the fastest growing minority segment in the U.S.”

“Our location as well as the significant number of award-winning Hispanic professors in our faculty places us in a unique position to establish such a program,” added Professor Fernando Figueredo, chair of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations. “Seventy percent of the students we graduate from the SJMC are of Hispanic heritage, and university-wide at FIU, we graduate more Hispanic students than any other university in the country.”

SJMC already has courses set up that cover Spanish language journalism and Hispanic market communications, and the new Hispanic Communication Studies, headed by Figueredo and Ponte, will build on that foundation.

“Our goal is to further and enhance the current Hispanic-market-driven research agenda at FIU on critical issues affecting the U.S. Hispanic community, specifically focusing on the way these issues are communicated to internal and external audiences.

FIU is uniquely positioned to house this institute since it graduates more Hispanic students than any other university in the U.S.,” said Heather Rais-Hernandez, Marketing Director for SJMC.

Currently, approximately 50 students are enrolled in the program. To register for the program, students will have to register for courses after discussing their interests with Figueredo or Ponte.

2010 peer advisors chosen

MIKIALA C. TENNIE
Staff Writer

A loud reception, barbecue food, and enthusiastic applause greeted the selection of new peer advisors for the spring semester on Jan. 4.

This semester’s Biscayne Bay Campus peer advisors are Nardo Doron, Shannon Douglas, Fabiana Ferrer, Judi Jolmisse, Kimberly Lauriston, Ana Perez, Anastacia Straza, Gabrielle Wheeler and Eric Feldman.

Peer advisors help new students and their parents adjust to life at FIU. The advisors participate in and help plan all orientation events throughout the year-long term. These advisors play a large role in welcoming transfer students.

Vicky Owles, associate director for Campus Life, presented the new advisors to the student body in Panther Square. Each advisor received a certificate noting their new position.

“Being a peer advisor is a great honor. This group was chosen because it’s a great group of students; they have the highest GPAs of any group,” Owles said.

Peer advisors are chosen based on a strict selection process. Students interested in peer advising must first understand the ethical standards associated with the job. Chosen applicants matriculate for a day-long selection workshop, at which finalists are chosen and interviewed one by one.

After the interview, only 35 out of 200 applicants for both MMC and BBC are selected.

Kimberly Lauston, a newly hired peer advisor finds working with new students to be the most rewarding part of the job.

“I look forward to helping freshmen and helping them get acquainted with the campus,” Lauston said.

Judge refuses to grant informant lighter sentence

Curt Anderson
Associated Press

A federal judge refused Monday to postpone prison or consider a lighter sentence for a former Swiss banker-turned-informant who helped launch a massive U.S. tax evasion investigation into banking giant UBS AG.

The decision by U.S. District Judge William Zloch means Bradley Birkenfeld must report to prison Friday to begin a sentence of three years and four months, which is longer than what prosecutors had sought. Zloch also refused to schedule a hearing on whether to reconsider the sentence. Birkenfeld pleaded guilty last year to a fraud conspiracy charge.

Prosecutors credit Birkenfeld, 44, with exposing wrongdoing at UBS and leading investigators to thousands of suspected American tax cheats who hid assets in the Swiss bank’s accounts. But they also said Birkenfeld failed to disclose his own crimes, including his work for a California real estate magnate who pleaded guilty in 2007 to tax charges.

Prosecutors declined comment on Zloch’s ruling. The Washington-based National Whistleblowers Center, whose attorneys are representing Birkenfeld, said in a statement that putting such a prominent informant in prison could “kill the goose that laid the golden eggs” by deterring others from coming forward.

“If the (Obama) administration is actually serious about going after offshore tax evasion they need to be encouraging whistleblowers, not throwing them in jail,” said Dean Zerb, special counsel at the Whistleblowers Center.

At Birkenfeld’s sentencing hearing in August, prosecutors said they may seek a sentence reduction if he continues to cooperate, but to date have not done so.

In court documents, Birkenfeld lawyer Robert Stickney said the ex-banker is “ready, willing and able to cooperate further with the government.” However, no meetings have been held since his August sentencing.

Birkenfeld, a U.S. citizen who lived in Switzerland for 15 years, has been described as the single most important informant in the U.S. probe of tax evasion and secrecy at UBS and other banks.

Armed with his disclosures, U.S. officials reached a deferred prosecution agreement with UBS last February in which the bank agreed to pay a $780 million fine and reveal names of some 500 clients.

Later in 2009, UBS agreed under U.S. pressure to release names of 4,450 wealthy Americans suspected of using secret accounts to evade billions of dollars in U.S. taxes. None of those names has been made public, but several other former UBS clients have been prosecuted in the U.S. based on the initial disclosures.

Birkenfeld, meanwhile, has applied with the Internal Revenue Service for a whistleblower reward that, if approved, could bring him tens of millions of dollars, if not more. That request remains pending.
Terrorists will adapt to any new security methods, devices

DAVID A. BARBOS
Opinion Editor

On Sunday, Jan. 3, travelers will be making their way through the security checkpoint of the airport terminal at Newark Liberty International Airport. It is the latest example of the dilemma that we now face: how to feel secure in a time when there is no security.

Passengers in the checkpoint waiting to board their flights, or those who had already boarded their flights, were forced to go through security again, contrasting the terminal and setting back flights for several hours.

This situation unfolds just over a week after a Umar Faruq Abdulmutallab decided to try to leave the American people with a very merry little Christmas gift on a Northwest Airlines flight en route to Detroit.

Of course, as Americans, we do what we always do best: we become scared and try to find a way to feel secure after our bubble bursts. There are too many issues at hand that will not allow us to be fully secured. Just before the incident in Newark, the Transportation Security Administration announced that passengers coming in from states that sponsor terrorism and “countries of interest” will be subject to an aggressive type of screening entering the U.S. These enhanced screenings would include full-body pat-downs, carry-on bag searches, full-body scanning and explosive detection technology.

Countries on this list include a venerable who’s who of terrorism harboring nations including Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Sudan.

All those traveling into the U.S. are also subject to possible random extensive methods. It’s a good start in terms of security but it is fair to note that individuals flying on domestic, non-foreign, flights were used to execute the most deadly terrorist attack on American soil on Sept. 11, 2001.

In an Associated Press article dated Jan. 1, 2010, Michael Boyd, an airline industry analyst, stated that pat-downs done by TSA agents for domestic flights can be highly ineffective.

“To have people hold up their arms and just pat them — like I’m really going to carry a bomb there. I know where you’re going to put it and no one’s going to go through that,” Boyd said.

Abdulmutallab hid the explosives he was carrying near his genitals. Usually, screeners tightly lap a passenger’s arms, legs and clothing. TSA agents won’t even go near these areas in fear of possible lawsuits and complaints.

It was noted in the same AP article that these pat-downs are not nearly as thorough as police pat-downs, which include checking areas such as the buttocks and groin.

The article also includes a list of “do’s and don’ts” established in 2004 for TSA agents, including no touching of female passengers between their breasts. Enhanced pat-downs including crotch grabbing and breast searches can now be used on an extremely limited basis if a suspect continues to fail going through security.

Low and behold, The Washing
ton Post is now reporting that there is another possible solution: the full body scans. These devices can take X-ray-like images of people passing through them and can reveal objects that people have beneath their clothes.

Forty units have been installed at 19 airports including Reagan National and Baltimore-Washington, but 150 new units will be installed around the country within the next few months.

Rest assured, though. The images are sent to another room in the airport while sensitive areas of the body are obscured to those making inspections.

“There’s a way to beat it. It’s called a ‘body bomb,’ where you actually insert the explosive inside the human being and then you detonate the explosive with a cell phone,” said James Carafano, a homeland security expert from the Heritage Foundation.

The conclusion then is simple; terrorists adapt. There are always new ways to complete your objective. The other fact that becomes more and more evident in this post-9/11 world is that you can’t secure yourself. Human error, as seen on Dec. 25, 2009, or old-fashioned complacency, as seen on Sept. 11, 2001, will always be with us at risk.

Obama climate reform falls short in Copenhagen

ANA AROCHA
Staff Writer

What could have resulted in great publicity and even greater support for President Obama, whose approval ratings have been swiftly dropping, resulted in the exact opposite due to his impatience.

This past December, President Obama met with other world leaders in Copenhagen, Denmark to decide on a legally binding treaty that would succeed the Kyoto Protocol coming into effect in 2012.

The Protocol is linked to the United Nation’s Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

After two weeks of negotiations, instead of extending his stay in Denmark, Obama assembled a group of world leaders from China, India, Brazil and South Africa and settled a deal that fell short of the expectations set for the Copenhagen Conference.

The summit occurred in what was disappointing the general public as well as that of the other 20 countries not included in the negotiations.

Under the accord, developing nations would be provided with $10 billion a year for three years to help them develop clean energy and to deal with droughts, floods, and other impacts of climate change.

Also, all countries would have to produce their individual plans for the reduction of their carbon emissions. But the deal is not legally binding to any nation and does not commit them to emission cuts capable of creating any actual global change.

The U.S. plans on reducing emissions by 17 percent from the 2005 levels and China plans a cut of 40 to 45 percent from the same year. These two countries are the world’s largest carbon polluters.

In 2007, China alone was responsible for two-thirds of the global carbon dioxide emissions. Both countries were expected to produce larger cuts as seeing as they produce the most pollution.

In addition, the Chinese government refuses international monitoring of its emissions. Obama was criticized for not being more proactive not offering more cuts despite his involvement in negotiating the accord.

The executive director of Greenpeace International, Kumi Naidoo, believes the accord is not enough and that the job of the world leaders is not done.

“We have seen a year of crises, today it is clear that the biggest one facing humanity is a leadership crisis,” he said.

In fact, other world leaders included in the conference were not exactly happy with this accord. Leaders of Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela attacked the accord, saying that it would not help global warming and that it was secretly negotiated by only five of the 25 nations.

“A gross violation has been committed today against the poor, against the tradition of transparency and participation of equal footing for all parties of the convention and against common sense,” said Sudanese ambassador Lumumba Di-Aping.

In their haste to call the conference a “success” for completing its goal of developing a treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol, Obama and his peers only succeeded in isolating other nations.

This non-binding treaty will only serve as avoidable protocol, not as a potential cure for global warming.
**New series resurrects the Captain**

In 1985 the fastest man alive, The Flash, ran himself to death trying to save an infinite number of earths from total destruction. And in 1992, Superman was beaten to death by a horrible monster named Doomsday.

These are just two names from the extremely large list of superheros that end up dying just to sell comics.

The issues that told the story of these deaths sold out nationally - the latter brought Superman and his tragic end to TV screens and local news stations across the world. With all of the success the death of heroes brings to the comic book industry, people tend to overlook the strangest part - that they keep coming back.

The most current example involves Captain America who died in 2007 during the finale of the Marvel Comics story arc, Civil War. Captain America was the highest selling comic book of March that year. After his death, many fans complained that no one would be able to fill the role of the super hero, and yet Marvel decided to put Captain America’s old sidekick, Bucky, in the role. For three years, Bucky has been the Captain and gained the loyalty of lots of old Captain America fans.

This makes me wonder why the company has decided to revive the original Captain. The story of his return is told in a six-issue, limited series entitled Captain America: Reborn, with the biggest part of it all being told in a single issue - a one-shot called Captain America: Who Will Wield The Shield?

Both the series and the one-shot have their merits as comics. The art is interesting, intriguing and is prominent when comparing the gritty realism in Reborn with the classic style in WW76, which is akin to comic art of the 60s and 70s. The writing is compelling too. Team-ups of classic Cap villains and allies partaking in giant action scenes make it all feel like a summer blockbuster.

Despite these good qualities though, it’s hard for a fan to not feel swayed in the purchase of these comics. Comic book companies have often been accused of murdering heroes for the sake of sensationalism and strong sales. This is reinforced by the fact that, when fans complain, they resurrect the heroes in multiple series ‘which readers need to buy in order to get a story involving their favorite characters. The rebirth of Captain America seems to be falling into this trend and is even doing a sloppy job of it. WW76 comes out before the final issue of Reborn does, even though the former is supposed to be an epilogue to the entire story. One might say that this was due to Marvel’s rush to get content out to the fans who want to buy these issues whether it’s in order or not.

In the end, the true merit of Captain America’s return can only be judged in the long run after seeing what the character is used for. Until then, Captain America: Reborn and its aftermath are entertaining reads for fans of the hero, but the issues do not detract the grandeur that Marvel is hyping them with.

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**An exhibition called “The Art of Illumination,” which will use lighting and digital technology to expand the museum’s reach and visibility, will utilize its exterior walls.**

People are very visual and it will make it another attraction that will be known on South Beach along with its other allure of nightlife, the beach and dining,” said Maria Rodriguez, a junior majoring in advertising. “It’s a great idea to bring in new crowds and invite the regulars to see the place through a different perspective.”

Located on 10 Street and Washington Avenue, The Wolfsonian is FIU’s museum and research center in the heart of Miami Beach.

The building itself does not have fan South Beach look. In fact, it is formerly a storage building, in a bright light city that, according to Director Cathy Leff, conveys a message of “go away.”

That message is contrary to what The Wolfsonian wants to display, which is why it has planned to turn the building inside out.

“The purpose is to convey images on the outside so people know what is inside. We want the energy from within to project outside and give identity to the building, but also to provide and engage with a broader community using design,” Leff said.

The concept was created by a lighting designer from New York back in 2005, but the project never moved forward due to lack of funding. Thanks to a recent $500,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the museum will finally have the funds needed.

The Knight Foundation is a nonprofit, philanthropic organization incorporated in the state of Florida since 1990 when it moved from Akron, Ohio. The Knight Foundation invests millions of dollars in making art accessible to the community.

The “Art of Illumination” project proposal was one of three The Wolfsonian submitted and one of 20 submitted by South Florida cultural institutions and artists. It was awarded the second highest grant.

It will take three years to complete. The displays will come in different formats: interactive, digital, photographs, video and moving text.

“Other well known buildings, like the New York Times building in New York by architect Renzo Piano, have similar displays that bring attention to them,” said Daniel Quindemil, a senior majoring in architecture. “It will help The Wolfsonian stand out and people will notice it more now.”

In addition to standing out and decorating the building, the exhibition will also have educational value like the indoor exhibits.

Some of the displays will be digital reproductions of pieces already inside the museum, other contemporary works and works that show the purpose of the museum. According to Leff, it will support the role that the power of design plays in people’s lives.

“It all has a basis in education and allows exhibition on exterior walls that will project to the community the richness of the content within the building,” Leff said.

For more information on the upcoming “Art of Illumination” displays or other exhibitions at The Wolfsonian, visit its Web site www.wolfsonian.org.
YOU'RE IT

Junior Yanet Gomez, advertising major, shoots down her opponent during a game of laser tag in the Graham Center Ballroom lawn on Jan. 4 as part of Week of Welcome.

‘Scrobbling’ helps site users keep track of their favorites

Members can post questions and provide tips to other users. You can also follow Last. Fm on Twitter and Facebook.

There are also Last.Fm applications available for download to your iPhone or iPod touch, although scrobbling directly from devices is not available.

The site was recently made available for use on Xbox Live by Gold members.

The software that Last.Fm uses must be downloaded to your computer.

This proves to be very vital because even if your browser crashes, you will still be able to enjoy its features.

The Web site is very easy to use. Any help you may need can be found in the FAQs section, which provides answers to a number of problems a user could incur.

If the solution to the problem is not there, posting the question in the forum is another option.

Last.Fm is a fun, versatile way to listen to the music that you love and the music that you have yet to discover.

It brings people together from all over the world who want to share and enjoy music.

The Beacon does not receive free goods or services in exchange for positive reviews.

To solve the sudoku puzzle, every row, column and 3x3 box must contain the numbers 1-9 only once. Check your answers in Friday’s issue.

Diversions is back! Be sure to check it out every Wednesday.
Team seeks consistency at home

JOEY CRUZ
Staff writer

Entering the thick of the conference schedule, FIU coach Isaiah Thomas and the Golden Panthers will face the University of Louisiana at Monroe on Thursday, Jan. 7 at U.S. Century Bank Arena. FIU is 4-13 on the season, while ULM holds on to a 6-9 record.

FIU and ULM both share a 1-3 record in the Sun-Belt conference. After losing back-to-back conference games (South Alabama and New Orleans), the Golden Panthers will need to bounce back at home and finally attain that elusive second conference win.

ULM is just 1-7 on the road, which should give the Golden Panthers a chance to come away with a victory against the Warhawks. Thomas has stated earlier this season that his team would like to establish a covered home court advantage, but have not been able to create that thus far with just two wins in five contests at home.

Three-point shooting will be key in the context as FIU shoots a poor 26 percent from beyond the arc, while ULM shoots at a steady 38 percent clip.

Another aspect of the game is three-point shooting will be key in the turnover battle. FIU is averaging 13 turnovers a game, but are also stealing the ball eight times a game.

OFFENSIVE LINE

The offensive line is arguably the biggest need for FIU coming into 2010, and locals David Delsoin and Stanley Istanich are currently committed as reinforcement.

Delsoin has coveted size at the position (6’6”, 270 lbs) and St. Jean is considered a raw but athletic prospect with considerable upside.

Seniors Mario Caraballo, Brad Serini, and Cedric Mack are likely to start inside, along with Rupert Bryan and Dave Istanich at the tackle spots, but FIU does not boast proven backups at any position on the line.

Bluestein said Delsoin is a sleeper with a massive potential, and people shouldn’t look into the fact that he played against a low level of competition at Sheridan Hills high.

“(Delsoin) is going to be a Warhawks defense that has struggled this season to stop Sun-Belt opponents.

Last year, the Warhawks slammed FIU 81-64 at ULM in the only match up between the two teams.

Sleepers highlight offensive commits

RECRUITING, page 8

(West Virginia), but came up short.

South Dade sleeper J.J. Worton had a very good senior year and has gotten FIU’s attention, but no offer has been made.

Forwards Marlon Bright and J.C. Otero have been forced to play inside positions due to crippling injuries. The already undersized Golden Panthers must crash the boards and attempt to out rebound their opponent, in this case the Warhawks leaders in rebounding margin.

The Warhawks hit the boards with Rudy Turner and Timmie Sykes, who both snatch over five rebounds a game.

Another aspect of the game is three-point shooting will be key in the turnover battle. FIU is averaging 13 turnovers a game, but are also stealing the ball eight times a game.

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Golden Panthers showing prowess on defensive end

WOMEN, page 8

with a lengthy list of injuries. During a game against Georgia Tech on December 29, senior Marquita Adley returned to play from a shoulder injury, but unfortunately Rakia Rodgers went down with an MCL sprain in her left knee during that same game.

The sophomore, who transferred from Hofstra, was playing in just her fourth game of the season after setting out the first nine games due to NCAA transfer regulations and will now be out another 4-6 weeks.

“We continue to be frustrated with our injury situation and we can’t get a break,” said Russo. “We’re hoping to have Marquita play some minutes and help us out while we face more injuries.”

Aside from the frustrations, Russo is pleased that her team’s defense continues to improve.

SWEAT TEAM

Center Maja Krajacic has been a solid starter in her junior year, blocking almost three shots per game.

The 6-foot-4 defensive machine currently paces the Golden Panthers and leads the conference for shots swatted with 36 and ranks 18th in the entire nation for that statistical category.

Right on Krajacic’s heel is Elisa Carey, who has also continued to show her effectiveness on defense by averaging 2.0 blocked shots and 9.3 rebounds per game, which is good for third and fourth in the SBC, respectively.
**Promise seen with new verbal commits**

Just one year after generating buzz with a surge of success in the Golden Panthers suffered a 3-9 campaign in 2009. An under performing defense was compounded by a slew of injuries that held the team back for much of the season.

Although the season was a setback in many ways, FIU continues to impress on the recruiting trail as it relates to the Sun Belt conference.

Head coach Mario Cristobal is in the process of putting together his third consecutive class ranked among the top three in the SBC, according to rivals.com.

While the incoming class, based on nonbinding verbal commitments, is not ranked in the top half nationally, it is easily considered to be among the best in the conference.

Miami Herald recruiting analyst Larry Blustein said there is a lot to like about the list of future Golden Panthers.

"I think they are doing better than most would think," he said. "They have some players, that if they pan out, could play anywhere in the country."

No longer hampered by NCAA sanctions, FIU has its full allotment of 25 scholarships in 2010 and trails only Troy in conference class ranking roughly a month before signing day.

The outlook of the depth chart:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jake Medlock</td>
<td>QB</td>
<td>Fletcher H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedrick Rhodes</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Trinity Catholic H.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley St. Jean</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>Sheridan Hills H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Delsoin</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>Miami Central H.S.</td>
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Fletcher High signal caller Jake Medlock will likely be the only quarterback FIU brings in for this class.

A three-star prospect on the rivals five-star scale, Medlock held scholarship offers from Virginia and Arkansas before verbally committing to FIU.

Medlock processes solid height (6-foot-2), in addition to a strong arm and plus mobility, but suffered a serious shoulder injury that forced him to miss most of the 2009 season.

The injury has not wavered FIU’s interest, however, and Blustein says Medlock “could be the steal of the entire recruiting season.”

According to Blustein, Medlock is one of the top five quarterback prospects in the state who physically and mentally has to the tools to have a tremendous impact.”

If healthy, Medlock could challenge for the starting gig in 2010, but more likely, Medlock will be groomed as the successor to ballyhooed junior transfer Wesley Carroll.

Hillsborough High quarterback Taran Austin is also in the fold, as he is set to take an official visit to FIU on January 15th. Austin is also considering New Mexico, South Florida, Iowa State and Purdue, among others.

**RUNNING BACK**

FIU dealt a blow when three-star back Casey Turner removed his FIU commitment in the process of putting together his third consecutive class ranked among the top three in the SBC, according to rivals.com.

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>NAME</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>Trinity Catholic H.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kedrick Rhodes</td>
<td>Trinity Catholic H.S.</td>
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**WIDE RECEIVER / TIGHT END**

The 5-foot-10 all-purpose threat from Trinity Catholic compiled nearly 1,700 yards as a junior, and will look for carries in a crowded backfield in 2010. Blustein noted that Rhodes “is a bigger back that runs well and runs hard” and is coming into an FIU spread offense that is similar to what he was a part of in high school.

FIU coaches were pleased with the emergence of sophomore Kendall Berry late in the season, but Darriett Perry had a disappointing sophomore campaign and was bumped up for much of the year. Ideally, Perry, Rhodes, Darriett Perry or Syracuse transfer Jeremiah Hardeman would emerge as a capable replacement in the rotation to replace the departed Daunte Owens.

"Last year they went for the smaller back (Berry) and he did ok, but [Rhodes] is very well schooled and coached."

**FIU WOMEN VS ULM @ 7 PM.**

**As injuries mount, FIU prepares for Sun Belt foe**

After matching last year’s win total midway through this season with six, the FIU women’s basketball team might feel relieved.

However, the Golden Panthers will try to overcome their longest losing streak of the season, which is currently at three, as they host Sun Belt conference opponent Louisiana-Monroe on Wednesday, Jan. 6 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

FIU (6-9, 1-3 Sun-Belt) is coming off a 46-39 loss to Sun-Belt conference opponent New Orleans.

The defeat marked the team’s lowest scoring output of the season, which was previously 48 points against Denver on December 14.

"We couldn’t hit anything,” said FIU head coach Cindy Russo. “We took some good shots but few would fall for us.”

Meanwhile, Louisiana-Monroe (7-7, 1-3 SBC) is also coming off a loss, which was against conference opponent Arkansas-Little Rock.

Jesse Carrier is the Warhawks’ main threat, averaging 11.4 and 4.0 rebounds per game.

The guard also leads her team in three-point field goals made with 26.

Louisiana-Monroe ranks fourth overall in the SBC West division standings while FIU sits in last place in the East.

The Warhawks are averaging 60.5 points per game and giving up 63.2 to their opponents while the Golden Panther offense totals just over 62 points, which is good for seventh place in the conference.

Monika Bosilj is currently leading FIU in scoring with 11.3 points per game.

The senior needs just eight more treys to capture the school record for career three-point field goals made.

FIU continues to struggle this season with six, the FIU women’s basketball team might feel relieved.