SPOTLIGHT

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Senator discusses U.S. foreign relations

MEENA RUPANI  Staff Writer

United States Senator George LeMieux was present at the College of Law Auditorium on Jan. 15 discussing the present and future foreign policy of the United States in Latin America.

LeMieux was sworn in to the Senate in September 2009, replacing outgoing Republican senator Mel Martinez, who resigned from office in early 2010.

LeMieux currently serves on the Senate Armed Services and Commerce and Aging committees.

Prior to that, he served as Chief of Staff to Governor Charlie Crist, who appointed him to the senate seat, according to the Senator’s Web site.

LeMieux began his lecture by acknowledging the devastation in Haiti and stating that the U.S. will be judged based on how we respond to what occurred in the country on Jan. 12.

“These are our neighbors, they are in our backyard. Lending from Miami specifically is critical,” LeMieux said.

Following the discussion of the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, LeMieux dove into the subject of the

SPOTLIGHT

Outreach program aims to help sophomores

LAEBONY LIVINGSTON  Staff Writer

Sophomore students who feel they are at risk of dropping out may have a solution to their problems.

Rice Perkins, a graduate student in Higher Education Administration, is head of the committee overseeing the Student Success Outreach Program, the first program of its kind at FIU.

The program began as a paper for a graduate assignment when Perkins discovered that there is a population of students who needed help after their freshman year.

The program will focus on students who are at risk of probation, but it is completely voluntary. Perkins said that the program is meant to “give students an outlet and source of community.”

“The students are expected to know how to navigate the college once they have moved past their sophomore career, but many are still lacking direction,” Perkins said.

The formal planning for the program began in the Fall semester when Perkins put together a committee of eight from various organizations around campus to come up with activities to help sophomores find direction.

Members of the committee come from the Center for Academic Success, the athletic department, Career Services and there is also a junior student to add variety to the committee.

Many students go through the “sophomore slump,” a transitional phase where their grades tend to drop and they once again feel as if they have no direction.

“People are more likely to quit during their sophomore year than during their freshman year, so we want to keep them enrolled,” said Consuelo Boronat, director of assessment and evaluation for Student Affairs.

SOS wants to combat that “slump” with activities such as community involvement, career readiness workshops and other academic workshops. The students will meet with Perkins to map out their FIU career and a mentor program will also be

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Cindy Russo and FIU take on UALR in conference matchup

STEPHANIE GABRIEL  Asst. Sports Director

Cindy Russo’s hard work has paid off over her 34 year career, as the women’s basketball head coach notched her 625th win on Jan. 20, against Arkansas State.

Russo’s work will continue as FIU faces Arkansas-Little Rock at 5 P.M. on Jan. 23, at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

The Golden Panthers will attempt to contain one of the Sun Belt Conference’s top players, Chastity Reed. The junior averages 24.5 points per game, putting her second in the conference.

The 6-foot-1 forward, who also leads the SBC in defensive rebounding at 6.3 per game, was a preseason first team All-Conference selection.

The last time FIU saw her, Reed led all scorers with 22 points to lead the Trojans to a 62-51 victory over the Golden Panthers on January 31, 2009.

“[Reed] can really run the court,” said FIU point-guard Michelle Gonzalez. “She can play the one, two, three, four, and five so we’ll have to decide who is going to defend her.

Russo turned the ball over 21 times in the loss last season but still managed to shoot 47.7 percent from the field.

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Consuelo Boronat, Director Assessment and Evaluation for Student Affairs

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leMieux discusses U.S. relationship with Venezuela

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LECTURE and gave a description of what is occurring and what should occur in a few Latin American countries. “Policy in these countries should not be transactional, we must put the people of the region first,” LeMieux said. “Liberty, freedom and the rule of the law are the backbone of civil society.” According to the LeMieux, democracy in Latin American countries has been backsliding in recent years and the U.S. needs to have more of a presence in these countries to influence democracy on them. The senator gave a few case studies in order to illustrate the points he discussed. He spoke of the cases of Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Honduras. Most important of all these countries, he stated, was Cuba and Venezuela because of their recent connections to terrorism. “The developing relationship between Chavez in Venezuela and Ahmadinejad in Iran should be worrisome to the American people,” LeMieux said. “Venezuela should be our biggest ally, but instead Chavez is seeking to destroy democratic ideals.”

According to the senator, this is significant because it is only 90 miles from our shore and has become a haven for terrorist groups recently.

Hamas and Hezbollah have become deeply involved in a few Latin American countries, this is a disturbing trend to hear about,” LeMieux said.

LeMieux concluded his lecture by discussing the future of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and why the U.S. is different from other allies of Latin America. “Our nation is unlike any other in the world, we have sought to liberate people without conquering their territory,” LeMieux said.

“Not even the United Kingdom can make this claim,” he added. In terms of the future, LeMieux stated that it is key to pass more free trade agreements with the Latin American countries he discussed.

“If the people can see that there is hope and the opportunity to prosper, then they will not fall back to their non-democratic ways,” LeMieux explained. He added that the U.S. must be a respectful ally to Latin America and it is our responsibility to commit to the people of these countries.

“The seeds of capitalism need to be sown in democracy,” LeMieux said.

Afterward, students who attended the lecture reacted to what the senator discussed. One student, Michelle Meulens, thought the senator did not give enough of his own view points on the current U.S. foreign policy stance in Latin America.

“For the most part I felt he was basically giving a briefing. I was curious about his own opinions. However, he did make it clear that the United States should consider Latin America in terms that go beyond its own benefit,” said Meulens, a junior majoring in international relations. Another student, Katherine Pina, described the lecture in similar terms. “His speech gave the audience confidence that the U.S. government is aware of the significant issues, however, the lecture felt like a political rally. Pina said, a senior majoring in political science. “It was as if he was up for reelection,” she added.
New speaker pro-tempore seeks to increase transparency

LATOYA BURGESS  
Staff Writer

Nickolas Chikishev, a self-proclaimed skeptic, has become the new speaker pro-tempore for Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Chikishev, who was appointed as the new speaker on Jan. 11, replaced former speaker pro-tempore La Cat. The pro-tempore position entails substituting for the speaker of the senate, Tanya Williams, when she is not available and speaking on behalf of the members of the senate, according to Chikishev.

“I am glad to have this responsibility,” Chikishev said.

According to Chikishev, he joined SGC-BBC because he wanted to see how money was being allocated. He also wanted to get a better sense of what was going on from the inside.

“I didn’t like how [the SGC] was3 transparent and now we are as transparent as we could be,” Chikishev said.

Chikishev has been a part of SGC-BBC for two years. Last year he served as an intern for the council and said he attended more events last year than this year, but by not choice.

“I would attend more events this year, but my schedule doesn’t permit me to,” Chikishev said.

Chikishev’s main goal this semester is to make sure students are better informed about the consequences of getting parking tickets.

He says that just getting an e-mail about attaining the proper semester decal is “insufficient.”

“If there should be signs posted here at [BBC], [SGC] would pay for it... administrators have a lot of control and they strike us down,” Chikishev said.

Chikishev believes administrators don’t want students to know about the decals and it has become an issue that can no longer go unnoticed.

“There should be one person, not three people, giving out citations,” Chikishev said.

Wellness center is hosting an eight-week weight loss challenge

SERGIO MONTEALEGRE  
Staff Writer

Students aiming to slim down and get in shape have been issued a challenge.

Beginning today, the Biscayne Bay Recreation Center located in Room 160 of the Wolfe University Center is hosting an eight-week team weight-loss challenge to help participants achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. and lasts until 3 p.m. at the Wellness Center in WUC 330. The challenge, which includes a fitness assessment (faculty and staff must pay $10 for the assessment), is open to any gym member for free. Registrants can sign up with a partner or alone.

“It’s to promote wellness,” said Andrea Rojas, a senior sociology major and assistant to Water Show, assistant director of Campus Recreation at Biscayne Bay Campus. “We’re not forcing people to be a certain size or shape... We’re not forcing people to get to a point they want the participants to get to by any means necessary. We want the participants to want to give up, especially when they’re so close to the end, if it happens and that causes a team to break up, the other member can still win the individual category prize,” Rojas said.

Missing a weigh-in will cause the data collected from the last weigh-in to be used in its place.

Participants are welcome to log their own progress in their own notebooks if desired.

The rules of the challenge include encouragement of exercise and healthy eating, but discourage drastic weight loss (over two pounds a week) and prohibit using weight-loss surgeries during the challenge and sabotage other teams.

For the final weigh-in, contestants are required to wear the same attire they wore during the initial weigh-in. For this reason, the Wellness Center recommends wearing a T-shirt and shorts.

“We want the participants to get to a point they feel comfortable with themselves,” Rojas said.

We’re not forcing people to be a certain shape or size...We want the participants to get to a point they feel comfortable with themselves.

Andrew Rojas, Senior, Psychology

The idea behind a two-or-more person team is that the partners will motivate each other as the challenge progresses to continue their diets and exercises.

However, if a team member should choose to drop out at some point in the challenge, their results from the last weigh-in they attended will be used when calculating the team’s final score at the end of the challenge. This means that being in a team and having a partner drop will doom the other entrant.

“We don’t want people to give up, especially when they’re so close to the end, if it happens and that causes a team to break up, the other member can still win the individual category prize,” Rojas said.

A group supports each other working with a group has added benefits.

Participants interested in working with a group, which the Wellness Center strongly recommends. Working with a group has added benefits.

“Groups support each other and helps them stay on track with the challenge,” said Rojas.

“Someone who works alone may become lazy, lose motivation and then just stop showing up.”

The challenge will consist of two or more teams.

For more information, contact the Recreation Center at 305-919-5678 or 305-919-4701.

Weekends with Paradise

ITALIAN PIZZA PLACE FAILS TO DELIVER ITS BEST

One of my closest friends is Cynthia, whom I call “Canada” and I have this tradition.

Whenever we are together we always let our inner kids out and each eat half of a pizza.

Being the good friend (and constantly hungry person) that I am, I decided to try a new pizza joint this weekend as a trial run before she comes home from the University of Florida. I went to Sal’s Italian Ristorante, 15717 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines.

The place seemed safe enough when I first walked in, but of course I always find a way to try new things on the day when I shouldn’t be there.

First of all, it bugged me that the guy who took my money was the same guy who was making the food. He had no gloves on, and touched my money with his dirty hands – and then made my pizza without washing them! As always, I tried to trust in the power of the hot ovens to burn off any traces of the swine flu I can get from his dirty hands as I turned around and pretended like I didn’t see what he did.

By the way, this whole “pizza maker taking cash” thing seems to be a common practice in a lot of pizza joints, and one that I feel needs to stop.

I ordered a personal Greek pizza, which includes kalamata olives, tomato, feta and mozzarella cheeses and oregano for $9.99.

As much as I wanted to try a new pizza joint, nothing can beat perfection. If I wanted pizza that made me want to gag when I ate it, I could have ordered Domino’s.
Incompetence in Washington on health care reform

CHRISTOPHER ROMAGUERA
Contributing Writer

Lately, the health care reform bill has been running into some obstacles, but considering the amount of time that has passed from the outset of this endeavor, the word “lately” doesn’t really work. I think “once again,” or “another” may be a more appropriate phrase to describe the seemingly never-ending process.

Last night’s victory for Scott Brown in Massachusetts is certainly another road bump in the process. The ongoing debates display weakness within our young president and a fear of taxes that will hold us back from legitimate reform. Instead of cries that we heard at town hall meetings last summer, claiming that President Obama has death squads trying to kill Ma Joad, we have an issue outside the application of the bill itself. We are now confronted with the controversy of how the government is going to finance a bill that the congress itself cannot seem to agree on in the first place.

Members of the Republican Party keep raising up the issue of new taxes to support the programs that will be established, including the establishment of insurance exchanges open to small-business owners and individuals to lower prices.

Howard Fineman, of MSNBC, says that “glory and honor aside, politics is about one thing: taxes.” While I do not completely agree with that referendum, I will say that “taxes”, in politics, is a dirty word. And for a president to say these words is lethal – these words will be recorded and replayed before the punctuation of the sentence it was uttered in can be deciphered. The perfect example in recent memory would be President George H.W. Bush, who stated in 1991 that more taxes would be needed in the midst of a failing economy. One of the taxes that has been bounced around more than most is the idea of a surtax on the rich. The cutoff point would be that of $500,000 for individuals and $1 million for families. If you have to put two commas in it, then the situation calls for a word.

Already the wails of “Socialism” can be heard. I mean, think of the audacity of our president to ask for the only valuable commodity of our richer brothers and sisters: their money. We need some toes to be stepped on, no pocket. I have to wonder now if this is just like every other case of indecisiveness that we have seen by this young administration. Obama has easily given up on some things for the health care bill that shouldn’t have been let go so easily.

For instance, the Public Option that the Senate version of the bill. Obama accepted the concession. My fear is that we have a president still trying for bipartisanship, when those bridges have obviously been burned long ago (so long ago the metaphor is now a cliché). By trying to make both sides happy, we have had binding compromises, resulting in stagnation, which for those keeping score would be the opposite of change.

We need some toes to be stepped on, no matter how hard it has to be done. Obama could have had this bill passed immediately when he was elected and highly popular, now we are no longer on the honey-moon. He is no longer prom king. We need a president that can make the decisions he finds best and execute them, without riding the waves of every lobby paid for by every conservative.

One thing is certain: the Democrats cannot wait and play nice. Their time is running short as the people’s patience runs short. According to the latest Ramunson polls, only 38 percent of Americans support health care reform. It may be far of the bill itself. Or they may just been too tired to care.

Brown’s victory is not a total game changer

CHRIS TOWERS
Staff Writer

You can change a lot about how something looks by changing the context.

It’s a favored trick of politicians looking to take a seemingly innocuous comment and turn it into something menacing, and it is quite effective. Whether people are too lazy or too careless or something else entirely, oftentimes you can get away with taking things out of context.

Scott Brown, a Republican purportedly of the fiscally conservative, socially liberal almost libertarian breed, shocked the world by defeating Martha Coakley, a Democrat, in a special election to fill the Senate seat of recently deceased liberal icon Ted Kennedy.

Three weeks ago, this seemed inconceivable. The prospect of a Republican winning Ted Kennedy’s seat in the deeply blue state of Massachusetts was laughable.

We were, as a year post Barack Obama’s inauguration and already the Democrats have lost their so-called Super Majority to a Republican from Massachusetts.

If you believe the right side of the political world, this is a clear and concise message to Obama that he’s already a lame duck. Americans are tired of the typical Washington way of doing things, and Brown represents a clear agent of change.

This is, of course, silly and over the top, although not altogether without merit. As with any triumph, even when it is an unexpected one, there is a certain electability inherent in the picture that people project onto a candidate.

And this is where context comes in.

Yes, a Republican winning the seat that represents, essentially the lone roadblock in the Senate to the passage of health care reform, Kennedy, who worked as hard as anyone over the years for health care reform, is something of a modern day Greek tragedy.

The irony, I don’t think, is lost on anyone. But to say that Brown won solely on the idea that the most liberal of states is fed up with Obama is oversimplifying the campaign entirely.

We are, in our country, at a time of something of a populist furor. The economy is still recovering and there is a sense that government has already messed things up enough.

And then here comes Martha Coakley and Scott Brown. On the one hand you have the picture perfect image of the stereotypical New England liberal.

She largely shied away from the sort of boots on the ground campaigning that Brown thrived in, and atmosphere she seemed to come off as out of touch, running attack ads in a time when people are increasingly growing wary of the types of vicious ads that peaked during the 2004 election.

Brown, on the other hand, hit all of the right notes on government spending and tax cuts, and played the party line exceptionally well on the health care debate, and came off, even in his acceptance speech, as a guy who was just "above the game.”

Yes, the Obama factor certainly played into this, but it must be remembered that this was a special election. This wasn’t a 10 month marathon, it was a race that lasted a few weeks, and in a race like that, there is much less room for error.

The problem, of course, is that much of his campaign snuck of cynicism designed to take advantage of a certain climate to get elected. Despite having supported and continuing to support the Massachusetts Health Care Reform of 2006, Brown has insisted he will hold firm as the necessary vote to essentially kill any further debate on health care in the Senate.

Regardless, Brown must be commended for pulling off a relative coup all things considered. He ran a great campaign and there is reason for optimism within the Republican Party for the first time since 2004. And just as with all politicians, now that the race is over, the onus is on Brown to prove he’s as independent a thinker says he is. The fact is, it’s a lot harder to govern wisely than to get elected.
Sigma Chi aims to become an official fraternity chapter

AMANDA BATECHIOR
Staff Writer

Jan. 14 was the start of the Interfraternity Council’s rush week, where 12 fraternities hold events each day looking for potential new members for their chapters. Sigma Chi, the newest fraternity on campus is looking to have 25 total members this semester in order to be in phase one of their recruitment process on the way to becoming a chapter at FIU.

There are 12 founding brothers of Sigma Chi at the University that were initiated this past Fall Semester. In order to be considered a colony, a fraternity needs to have 15 men initiated. For to be considered a fraternity chapter, a fraternity needs to have 35 men. They intend to have 40-plus members by mid Fall of this year.

David Trujillo is the current president of Sigma Chi at FIU. He first rushed Sigma Phi Epsilon and dropped due to certain traditions that he didn’t feel strongly about. Values and traditions were an important part of his decision making in finding the right fraternity.

Trujillo says Sigma Chi’s three main values are friendship, justice and academic excellence always comes first,” said Trujillo, a senior hospitality management major. “I also liked the idea of starting a fraternity and being a founding brother at FIU.

Sigma Chi’s rush week began on Thursday with “Poker Night,” where men could go to just hang out and meet the brothers in a casual atmosphere. As promised, the Student Programming Council at Modesto Mulaque Campus will provide the student body with yet another great comedy show.

This time around, it’s Eric O’Shea providing the laughs. Wildly popular among college students, the Connecticut-born comedian will bring his Elmo and celebrity-inspired personas to the FIU stage.

The comedian is most popular for his kilt “Songs for Commercial.” The skit of song suggestions for products such as tampons, Viagra and AT&T caught the attention of Holly wood heavyweight Steven Spielberg, who now is a proud fan. Adding to his success, O’Shea got a chance to perform “Songs for Commercials” at the 2009 Creative Emmy Awards alongside Carol Burnett, Betty White, Seth MacFarlane, Ted Danson and Jamie Lynn Sigler.

In 2007, O’Shea was named National Comedy Performer of the Year. He was chosen after being voted on more than 5,000 campuses nationwide. Due to his ever growing popularity on the college circuit and his self-proclaimed clean wit, getting O’Shea wasn’t an easy task.

Through the council’s yearly visit to the National Association for Campus Activities Conference – an organization that helps student councils circle around the country find entertainment resources for events – SPC-MMC snagged the opportunity to work with other colleges nearby in order to book the funny man.

“We actually booked him at [the] NACA South Conference. He was one of the top comedians there – everybody school wanted to book him. Luckily, O’SHA, page 6
O’Shea’s creative skits expected to be a big success

“...we were able to find schools around Florida who could bring him near the date that we were looking at, and we were able to cut the cost by ‘block booking’ with them,” said Cristina Rodriguez, president of SPC-MMC, who convinced O’Shea was the one for FIU when she introduced him at the NACA Conference back in October 2009 and hysteria soon followed.

“As I was on the stage introducing him, he crawled on stage next to me and started pawing at my leg like a panther and crawling around me and making the wildest motions. It was crazy. Needless to say, everyone was laughing and snapping pictures because it was amusingly ridiculous,” she said of her encounter with the comedian.

“O’Shea’s creative skits expected to be a big success. Eric Casas, a senior public relations major, is confident O’Shea’s show will be a hit.

“We expect the show to be a great success. Eric O’Shea has become a popular performer and we are proud to be able to present him to the FIU student community. He’s very funny. Not everyone can get over 3 million hits on YouTube,” she said.

SPC-MMC will continue to coordinate comedy shows for FIU spirit events.

Rodriguez said they have proven to be the most popular with students.

Comedy shows tend to generate a lively response from the crowd and are a great way to relieve stress from the semester by kicking back and having a few laughs. O’Shea will serve up the laughs when he performs Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. in the GC Ballrooms.
Clutch late free throws help FIU pull away

**ALL STAR SHOWCASE**

Cincinnati Bearcats’ quarterback Tony Pike and wide receiver Marty Gilyard are among a handful of college stars who will compete in the 12th annual Mercedes Benz College Football All-Star Challenge, held at the FIU Stadium on Feb. 1.

Sun Belt shaken up as New Orleans drops to Division III

The University of New Orleans has announced they will voluntarily withdraw from the Sun Belt Conference in 2010, after a student referendum to increase revenue via student fees failed. The Privaters’ will drop to Division III and the Sun Belt will move forward with 12 schools and no plans for further expansion.

Golden Panthers look to slow down Trojan threat

Gonzalez expressed what she thinks is the key to stopping the opposing offense. “They run a lot. Everyone wants to run against us,” continued Gonzalez. “We’ll have to be able to get back on defense to contain [Reed].”

Gonzalez hopes to be the main offensive threat for FIU. The sophomore currently leads all Golden Panthers in scoring with 12.0 points per game along with 3.3 assists.

FORWARDS Marquita Adley and Elisa Carey continue to be a productive front court tandem for FIU. Carey averages 11.5 points and 9.6 rebounds per game while Adley chips in off the bench with 10.1 points and 9.4 rebounds per game.

Arkansas-Little Rock is coming off a road win against Florida Atlantic University. The Trojans shot 45 percent against the Owls while Reed totaled 17 points along with six rebounds.

Most recently the Golden Panthers snapped a three game losing streak with a 65-65 home win over Arkansas State. After being out-rebounded in their previous three match ups, FIU was able to crash the boards and beat the Red Wolves 46 to 35, including 20 on the offensive glass.

The Golden Panthers came out aggressively in the second half as Bosilj knocked down seven points within the first two minutes to give FIU it’s largest lead, 37-25, before the Red Wolves began chipping away.

Sherina Scott knocked down a jumper with 1:21 remaining to tie the game, but Gonzalez responded to put her team up by two. The Red Wolves had no choice but to foul the rest of the way to bring it back to even, but FIU proved to be efficient as they went 4-for-4 from the free throw line during the final 24 seconds.

“We started out very positive and we had confidence that we could beat this team,” said Gonzalez.

The game at 14 before Gonzalez knocked down another three with 4:27 remaining to go up 19-16.

“We know that we’re a good half court basketball team,” said Gonzalez. “If we can make a team that runs half court they’re going to get loose. So that’s what we tried to do and it worked out.”

Mansare continued with a hot hand, knocking down two more shots to increase FIU’s lead to 28-22.

The momentum continued to grow on FIU’s side as freshman Carmen Miloglav knocked down a jumper to put her team up 30-25 at the end of the first half.

“Carmen starting has been good because our opponents plan to double the post players and press the point guard, so having her next to me brings a lot of help,” said Gonzalez.

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TOledo QB coach to take over offense

JONATHAN RAMOS
Sports Director

FIU football is expected to announce the hiring of Toledo quarterbacks coach Scott Satterfield as its new offensive coordinator.

Toledo team spokesman Paul Helgren could not confirm the report, but did say the team is awaiting confirmation from FIU on whether the hire is finalized.

Satterfield would replace Bill Legg, who departed to take the same position at Marshall. Satterfield was the passing game coordinator in addition to coaching the quarterbacks last season for the Rockets, helping them finish 13th in the Football Bowl Subdivision in total offense.

Leading up to his tenure with the Rockets, Satterfield was the offensive coordinator at Football Bowl Championship team Appalachian State, where the Mountaineers won three national championships from 2005-07 and jumped into national prominence with an upset of No. 5 ranked Michigan in 2007.

In 2009, the Golden Panthers finished 100th in total offense, and placed last in the Sun Belt Conference in rushing offense, mustering just 105 yards per game.

Injury sparks lineup change; Thomas rejoins team at home

JOEY CRUZ
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers line up has been dealing with a rotating cast lately.

As of the 62-56 victory over UL Monroe Jan. 7, FIU has been trying out a few different starting line-ups to try and find a winning formula.

J.C. Otero has entered the starting line-up after coming off the bench for much of the beginning of the season.

Steven Miro has also found himself thrust into a starting role; the Golden Panthers’ have won two of four games since the young Puerto Rican point guard has taken over the starting role.

Point guard Phil Gary Jr. had started the whole season, but has seen his minutes cut recently because of a battle with tendinitis in his knee.

“As it feels better and better every day,” said Gary, “I’m really happy that Monika could have this game because she’s been kind of stagnant,” said Gonzalez.

“I’m really happy that Monika scored the first five points of the game before the Red Wolves responded to take an 11-7 lead after seven minutes. Bolisj scored the first five points of the game before the Red Wolves responded to take an 11-7 lead after seven minutes. Freshman Finda Mansare knocked down a jumper with 7:21 remaining in the first half to tie it 18-18 at the half. The Red Wolves responded as they reached the 78-51 victory over the Golden Panthers, 65-61.

For the Red Wolves, Shantia Hurst led the way with a career high 20 points. Bolisj scored the first five points of the game before the Red Wolves responded to take an 11-7 lead after seven minutes. Freshman Finda Mansare knocked down a jumper with 7:21 remaining in the first half to tie it 18-18 at the half. The Red Wolves responded as they reached the 78-51 victory over the Golden Panthers, 65-61.

Bolisj’s 24 point night leads Panthers

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Asst. Sports Director

The FIU women’s basketball team was relieved to be back home.

After dropping two previous matchups on the road, the Golden Panthers (8-12, 2-5 Sun Belt) returned to Miami to defeat Arkansas State (7-11, 2-5 Sun Belt) 65-61 on Jan. 20.

The win not only broke a three-game losing streak for FIU, but it was also the 626th victory of head coach Cindy Russo’s career.

“The past two games on the road were really tough for us but as soon as we came back to practice it was really productive,” said point guard Michelle Gonzalez.

It was also a big night for senior Monika Bolisj who scored a game high 24 points.

“Tendinitis is really a hard injury to heal.”

Gary is trying to help fellow point guard Miro manage the game during his first glimpses of starting action.

“I just try to be a good teammate, giving advice when I should,” said Gary. “He’s doing the things he needs to do to help us win.”

Gary leads the Golden Panthers in assists and steals this season, ranking third in the conference in the latter category as well.

Gary, however, has also had a tendency to be careless with the ball, leading to a team high 54 turnovers. “I gamble a lot,” said Gary. “One thing coach has preached to me is if you’re going to gamble, be aggressive.”

SPARK OFF THE BENCH

Since the lineup change earlier in the month, FIU has topped each of their last four opponents in bench scoring.

Marvin Roberts, the Golden Panthers leading scorer with 16 points per game, has been providing a spark to offense off the bench. “It is mainly a matchup problem for other teams,” Gary said.

Since the change, the team has split two games with Roberts coming off the bench.

COACH COMES BACK

Jan. 19 was head coach Isaiah Thomas’ first day back to coach the team in practice since Jan. 13, when Thomas’ mother passed away due to a heart condition.

Thomas missed two conference games while in Chicago, against Middle Tennessee State and Western Kentucky.

Assistant coach Anthony Anderson was the interim coach for the duration of Thomas’ absence. “One day he was practicing with us, and the next day he was not coaching the game,” said Gary. “We were all shocked and played our hearts out to win the (MTSU) game for him.”

The Panthers play the University of Arkansas-Little Rock Saturday, Jan. 23 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

It would be Coach Thomas’ first...