University breaks ground on long-awaited project

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After years of planning and delays, the Student Academic Support Center got its official groundbreaking. Fighting wind and rain on Friday, Nov. 21, university staff and distinguished guests, highlighted by University President Mark B. Rosenberg, were able to bear the weather long enough for necessary speeches to be given and media pictures be taken.

“This ceremony is evidence of the fact that rain or shine, up or down, over or under, we’re going to get it done,” said Rosenberg. “That’s in our DNA.”

The 74,800-square foot Student Academic Support Center, scheduled to open in the spring of 2016, will be the one-stop building for all student financial and academic needs—the first building that incoming students will see and use most throughout their academic career.

The SASC will house departments such as enrollment services, one stop, financial aid, advising, honors colleges, graduate studies and study abroad, just to name a few.

“It’s going to be the student center,” said Jeff Gonzalez, vice provost for planning and institutional research. “It’s going to be the one stop for students and a central hub for student life. Given the focus that the institution has on every student counts, this is a way to help both our students and our prospective students see all that the institution has to make them successful,” said Gonzalez.

The $31 million building, that will be located east of Graham Center next to Barnes and Noble University, was slated to be the largest on campus, that will be used for academic services as well as orientation and special events.

With the SASC designed to co-locate departments which work together, it will also increase productive outside the classroom as they are inside. It will also have four general-use classrooms which will be the home of the $1.5 million UTEACH program for STEM instruction, and will be outfitted with a robust 250-seat auditorium, slated to be the largest on campus, that will be used for academic services as well as orientation and special events.

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Bryan Palacio/The Beacon

STEM institute changing traditional teaching method

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Using two separate grants from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, FIU’s Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Transformation Institute has been working to encourage the completion of degrees in the sciences.

Since 2010, the STEM institute had been going about this process by putting the money from the first HHMI grant of $1 million towards developing more creative, interactive processes in order to get students excited about science.

With the first HHMI grant, the institute funded efforts for each professor in specific STEM disciplines to transform one of their courses to fit the newer, more exciting mold to attract students to the sciences.

The second HHMI grant of $1.5 million works towards boosting the encouragement of students in chemistry, physics, biology and new mathematics courses.

Developing these new, exciting methods for teaching meant doing away with the traditional method for teaching—having students come in for a straight forward lecture before going off on their own to figure out what it was they just sat through.

According to Laird Kramer, physics professor and director of the STEM institute, this traditional teaching process is one that tends to discourage university students from pursuing degrees in science.

“If you take a typical physics course, your favorable attitudes towards physics learning will be decreased as a result of the instruction. A simple lecture becomes very dry, and to me that’s not what physics is about,” Kramer said.

The common change professors have been making to their courses is flipping them. This means that all lectures and lecture points (or any sort of instructional materials) will be available to students online.

Before showing up to class, the students will review whatever it is their professor had assigned to them. This allows students to go into the classroom with a general understanding of what the lesson is, and they can address any difficulties they already know they have with a professor or a learning assistant present.

An example of this “flipped” concept is seen in John Makemson’s general biochemistry class. It appears to be a typical lecture: He stands in between a projector screen twice his height and an auditorium containing close to 200 students.

He will present a series of questions to his students, such as, what amino acid group does the amino ornithine belong to? The question will be up on the screen behind him, followed by five possible answers labeled A through E. The students have exactly one minute to answer correctly.

A majority of them will sit in right clusters, each holding an iClicker device. For each question that comes up the students will always end up consulting the person sitting next to them in an attempt to figure out what the answer is for the students, these questions are all important. Not only because it is a quick refresher for upcoming class exams, but also because in-class questions will be graded.

“It’s a good buzz in the class. When students are talking to students, the students are doing the teaching for themselves. And attendance hasn’t been stronger too,” Makemson said.

Biology professor John Makemson teaches a "flipped course" concept lecture at a general biochemistry class. The concept brings lectures and PowerPoint material to be made to STEM students online.
Wellness Center to bring HIV, AIDS awareness at RAW Day

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Miguel Piaquadio, a testing counselor for the medical practice Care Resource, said it takes just one person in a sexually active relationship to spread the human immunodeficiency virus infection. The recommendation is that if you are sexually active you should get tested every three months.” said Piaquadio, “there is no need for a number of sex partners, you just need one person to get the infection.”

With World AIDS Day coming up on Monday, Dec. 1, the FIU Wellness Center is putting together one of their famed Random Acts of Wellness days. This World AIDS Day RAW Day will be dedicated to educate our FIU community about HIV and AIDS and the services open to them by SHS, said Stephanie Caceres, senior health educator and FIU student pursuing a masters in public health with a specialization in health promotion and disease prevention.

This year’s World AIDS Day theme is: “Focus, Partner, Achieve: an AIDS-Free Generation,” according to Caceres FIIU is doing its part to put this theme into practice. “We offer Safer Sex Education Counseling. Sexual Health presentations, free condoms, and free HIV testing,” said Caceres, “we partner with many organizations to ensure that students are informed of what their risks are and how they can minimize their risks.”

According to the Center for Disease Control, human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is a disease that can be easily transmitted through sexual intercourse, sharing needles or syringes or childbirth. This illness attacks the CD4 cells -- or T-cells -- which are a type of white blood cell that keep our immune system able to fight infections and diseases in our bodies. Along with attacking T-cells it also duplicates itself to keep causing damage.

“Once the person’s CD4 cell count is below 200 the disease is no longer AIDS; it’s now AIDS,” said Piaquadio.

Care Resource is an organization that provides HIV/AIDS research, prevention, care and treatment services to individuals in South Florida. It is South Florida’s oldest and largest HIV/AIDS organization and it has teamed up with FIU to provide its services to students and the FIU community.

Ebonie Paris, wellness coordinator of University Health Services said the wellness center’s RAW days consist of educational information, surveys and freebies and are planned by Student Health Services wellness assistants.

During World AIDS Day RAW Day, students will be informed of the many free services and resources available to them such as HIV testing and counseling.

They will be receiving information about these resources from student assistants who enjoy participating in such events and are getting experience in their field of interest.

Sofia Pablos-Aguirre, FIU alumna, working on a master’s in public health, and wellness assistant who plans these RAW Days enjoys talking and the communication aspect of RAW Day events.

“I like talking to students and giving them information that is relevant and can improve their health and lifestyle,” said Pablos-Aguirre.

According to Piaquadio and careresource.org, Miami-Dade County ranks No. 1 in the state of Florida in the number of new HIV and AIDS cases.

The Wellness Center provides free HIV testing and counseling, available by appointment during their regular hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. said Caceres.

Appointments are best made by calling the Wellness Center the day of in the morning, before 10:30 a.m., recommends Piaquadio. All services are confidential and are not only available to students, but to the whole community.

“Everybody has a right to medical care for HIV/AIDS, regardless of residency or citizenship status,” said Piaquadio.
World financial leaders warn of possible global economy crash

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In a sheer morose judgment, British Prime Minister David Cameron estimated that the world could be facing another financial fall in the near future. The United 20 most economically powerful countries gathered in Brisbane, Australia this past Nov. 23, for the annually held G20 Leaders’ Summit, where former Leader of the Opposition and current leader of the second largest European economic titan expressed his worries regarding the global economic circumstances.

“The euro-zone economy is teetering on the brink of a possible third recession,” he explained. He also went on to cite high unemployment and falling prices as a troublesome “red warning lights” that hint at a potential financial meltdown and suggests European leaders to act quickly. Subtract sub-prime loans and dying banks, and this seems like exactly the same situation the global economy was under just 6 years ago. Unfortunately, Cameron isn’t exaggerating, and it’s very much evident that the markets that drove growth in the early stages of Europe’s recovery are now slowly, but surely, failing away.

However, all of this begs the question, why haven’t European leaders taken action? Why can’t Germany’s Angela Merkel facilitate trade with Russia, since she has the best relation with Putin out of all European countries? Why doesn’t France’s Francois Hollande open new markets with smaller, willingly bordering countries? Well the answer isn’t quite clear yet. But what we do know is that every European country wants to protect their own private interests, and when you’re a European country tied to the European Union, you face the burden of knowing if you’re going to ignore Britain’s failing economy, which can affect all of Europe, or put aside your agenda to aid the situation. When your currency is dependent on other country’s currencies, you should care, and a lot.

Even putting lack of collaboration aside, just a plenty of other reasons with worrying economic forecast isn’t being addressed as it should. The plain fact is that there is just too much going on in the world today, and in every country could be traced to a whole area of factors that affect an economy.

Instability in the Middle East with an ever-growing and problematic ISIS, ongoing war in Ukraine, and the spread of Ebola, are all issues occupying not just news headlines worldwide, but also the minds of the individuals who need to direct their full focus on avoiding another international financial crisis. When a European leader needs to attend an economic meeting, suddenly there is an Ebola outbreak in North America and he/she must change plans to attend a mandatory emergency meeting with other world leaders. When Merkel seemed to finally have convinced Putin to cease fire in Ukraine, suddenly another heinous taking place in Syria by a member of ISIS, and she has to rearrange her productive talks with Putin to address the news. These people just never get a break.

Cameron concluded his speech noting that “Working through the agenda at the G20, it was clearer than ever how vital it is that we stick to our long-term plans”. Only he will tell. This makes us, as FIU students, think about how the actions, or lack thereof, made by politicians in a completely different and far different affects us.

Well, for starters, a bad European economy could cause a bad American economy, and as any student who lived through 2007-2008 would remember, we’ll experience budget cuts. Being a public university, we could witness departments receiving less funding, and especially those living on campus, need to time nor the place for scrutinizing conversations; if someone cares enough throughout the year, they would not have a list of bombarding questions for this one occasion. After a year of hard work, this day off should not be wasted on small talk and awkward encounters when we are in the opportunity to rejoice at all the things we are thankful for with the people we are thankful for.

Heading into the holiday season there can be a number things running through a student’s mind. A mix of course exams, work and family affairs can impact one for the worse.

With this issues at hand, it was a nice time for Parking and Transportation and the Student Government Council to meet and tour around the school for the Campus Safety Walk. The main focus last year was to keep students safe in many areas and it is clear the problem persists.

Each department, including the students and especially those living on campus, need to sit down and discuss what the plan for the rest of the year after year. Nowhere does the holiday was not created on the Thanksgiving the “right way.”

While you may be giving up expensive wine, and long table fortunes; if someone cares enough throughout the year, they should say to eat as much as possible, enjoy the day, and love everyone you surround yourself with. This includes friends and family members we never talk about how the actions, or lack thereof, made by politicians in a completely different and far different affects us. Also they should say to eat as much as possible, enjoy the day, and love everyone you surround yourself with. This includes friends and family members we never talk.

“Thanksgiving is neither the national holiday that entails discussing departments receiving less funding, and especially those living on campus, need to time nor the place for scrutinizing conversations; if someone cares enough throughout the year, they would not have a list of bombarding questions for this one occasion. After a year of hard work, this day off should not be wasted on small talk and awkward encounters when we are in the opportunity to rejoice at all the things we are thankful for with the people we are thankful for.

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Math professor talks about her experience to inspire students

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Ada Monserrat, professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, walked on the University of Cambridge’s campus and her heart was pounding—it was her first time visiting. She sat next to Hawking and he said, “Hello.”

Ada Monserrat, professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, met with Stephen Hawkings, whose impact on the world will forever benefit mankind. This is a day I will never forget.

Hawking believes one should focus on the things that you can do rather than regret the ones you can’t,” she said. “He’s an amazing man whose impact on the world will forever benefit mankind. This is a day I will never forget.”

Hawking isn’t the first major name that she has visited. She has traveled to many places over the years. “Every three months during breaks between every semester, I travel abroad to a different location, something that is inspiring, whether it’s the history and innovative things and their horizons. There’s so much history and innovative things and ideas that have happened in the past, and in the present that are happening now that people should be made aware of. Students can see that there is so much more than just Miami, they just need to get out there and see it for themselves.”

While in the UK, in preparation to meet with Stephen Hawking, she was able to arrange a private viewing of Newton’s personal copy of his book, “Philosophiae Naturalis Prinicipia Mathematica,” which is credited for developing calculus.

Monserrat’s main goal and reason for her travels is to inspire students and be able to enrich her own human experience in these different places that have significance worldwide.

“There is a whole other world out there that isn’t just Miami, that you need to explore and learn about,” she said. “I’m just glad I have the opportunity to share my experiences with the new generation coming along so they can be inspired to broaden their horizons. There’s so much history and innovative things and ideas that have happened in the past, and in the present that are happening now that people should be made aware of. Students can see that there is so much more than just Miami, they just need to get out there and see it for themselves.”

Do you need to break the bank to get a good phone?

TNS STAFF

It might seem as though everyone has an iPhone or Galaxy smartphone. But many customers are eschewing the best cameras and screens— and their top-end price tags— and choosing models that can get the job done at less than a third of the cost.

Sales of high-end Samsung and Apple phones remain robust, but demand for budget phones is growing. About a third of the crowd has made ZTE the No. 5 smartphone vendor in the U.S., according to IDC.

Nevertheless, smartphone makers like Motorola have a $129 Moto E as an alternative to its $500 Moto X. Microsoft Corp.’s Lumia 635 costs $179 or less, compared with the $550 its flagship Lumia icon retail for at launch. The Nokia 525 Mini, ZTE Corp.’s most expensive phone, retails for $280 contract-free. ZTE has a few models for just $100.

The cheaper phone does mean smaller profit. According to IHS iSuppli, ZTE makes about $130 per Nubia device sold, compared with several hundred for Apple and Samsung devices before marketing and administrative costs. But targeting the budget crowd has made ZTE the No. 5 smartphone vendor in the U.S., according to IDC.

Wait, you say, 200 is “cheap”? Many consumers in the United States see a $200 price tag on a typical high-end phone and think that is what the phone costs. But the phone company actually subsidizes about $450 or so of the total cost and recovers that by charging higher service fees for voice, text and data over the life of a two-year contract. Some carriers are now pushing customers to

SEE PHONES, PAGE 5
CULT CLASSICS
Originally released in 1999 and starring Mel Gibson, “Payback” is an old fashioned, noir influenced revenge film, based on the pulp fiction novel “The Hunter” by Richard Stark. The film is an homage to 1970s crime films, featuring a bad guy as our protagonist and ‘70s and noir style music.

“Payback” of course works on the general for its originality, style, and Mel Gibson. “Payback” does have some humor (the theatrical version), a somewhat different soundtrack, no voice over narration, and a completely different ending. Helgeland’s released his director’s cut in 2006, which now results in there being two versions of the same movie: the original theatrical cut and the “Straight Up” director’s cut.

In both versions, Porter (Gibson) is out for revenge for being betrayed, and more importantly, wants his share of some robbed money. The sum may only be $78,000, but Porter is determined to get it no matter what. Throughout “Payback” Porter goes through crooked cops, disposable men, and the top people in organized crime, never once caring about the consequences. The characters he runs into are all great, from a drug dealer, to the crooked cops, to triad gang members, and a dominatrix. Porter himself is a great character, definitely fitting the role of a bad guy (especially in the director’s cut); even though we shouldn’t really sympathize with him, I think he’s a pretty cool guy either way, definitely harking back to those ‘70 crime protagonists of old.

“Payback” of course works on the technical side of things, providing great direction and scenes, ranging from establishing shots, to action scenes, to even minor things one may not give much attention to. The blue tinted theatrical version doesn’t look too bad either, but I much prefer the non-tinted look of the director’s cut, which really shows the colors of the world and characters. The music in the film is also good in both versions, but I think the director’s cut also wins out here because it uses no licensed music (theatrical does, which really doesn’t surprise me); the score was re-written for this cut and matches the mood all too well. The score of the theatrical cut is good and even a little self-aware, while the score of the director’s cut is more low-key, somewhat aware of what it is but still playing it serious.

The voice over narration works for what is arguably a funnier and lighter hearted theatrical version (not to mention the more bombastic score). Yes, “Payback” does have some humor in it, and the film was heavily marketed this way, but do not mistake “Payback” for being very funny. This is especially true with the director’s cut, which has no voice over narration and is definitely not light hearted – not that it was ever light hearted to begin with. Then’s still humor, but it’s less frequent. And of course, there are the different endings, which I won’t spoil. Needless to say, one’s more accessible than the other, but one definitely suits the overall film better than the other.

As can be gathered, I much prefer the “Straight Up” director’s cut of “Payback.” In fact, the director’s cut is the only version available on Blu-ray and DVD (in the U.S. anyway). If you want to buy the original on DVD, you’ll have to track down since it’s now out-of-print. In truth, I think both versions are good for what they are, but I have no problems forever sticking with the director’s cut. I highly recommend the film in general for its originality, style, and Mel Gibson. It’s up to you which version you watch, or watch first.

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Quality phones don’t always come at premium prices

PHONES, PAGE 4

pay a phone’s full price in installments, such as AT&T’s Next plan, but $27 a month over two years doesn’t sound as bad as $650 all at once.

So who are the main buyers of these budget phones? The highest demand has been from those with prepaid wireless plans, which are popular among first-time smartphone buyers as well as customers who have poor credit and have to pay the full price of phones up front. But even that is changing.

Doug Kaufman, Sprint’s director of device strategy, says that 90 percent of phone sales with traditional contract plans had been for high-end devices, including year-old Apple and Samsung models. That’s dipped to roughly 80 percent over the past half-year. Not everyone wants to pay $27 monthly when a lower-end phone can be had for less than $10 a month. And with the rise of family plans, parents are getting cheaper phones for their kids while choosing the latest and the greatest for themselves, he says.

Michael Weaver, an executive at the mobile-messaging firm Waterfall in New York, bought a Motorola Droid Mini for $50 with a contract, compared with $200 upfront for a high-end phone. Others “feel like they need to buy (something) that can launch the space shuttle, but they don’t use half the features,” he says.

WORLDS AHEAD

Nadia Alharbi, pictured above, hands out Saudi coffee representing Saudia Arabia at the World’s fair. Alharbi is a level four student at the University’s English Language Institute. Pictured right, Xiaoxiang Bao, first year healthcare business administration masters student plays traditional songs from his native inner Mongolia. A set of Matryoshka dolls, (top right) also known as babushka or Russian dolls, are placed at the table representing Russia.

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'Payback:' a film worth seeing ‘for its originality, style and Mel Gibson’

Originally released in 1999 and starring Mel Gibson, “Payback” is an old fashioned, noir influenced revenge film, based on the pulp fiction novel “The Hunter” by Richard Stark. The film is an homage to 1970s crime films, featuring a bad guy as our protagonist and ’70s and noir style music.

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PHONES, PAGE 4

ToWorlds ahead

Nadia Alharbi, pictured above, hands out Saudi coffee representing Saudia Arabia at the World’s fair. Alharbi is a level four student at the University’s English Language Institute. Pictured right, Xiaokang Bao, first year healthcare business administration masters student plays traditional songs from his native inner Mongolia. A set of Matryoshka dolls, (top right) also known as babushka or Russian dolls, are placed at the table representing Russia.
Fresh off its bye week, the women’s swimming and diving team looked to use its 4-0 record as momentum for the Mizzou Invite, hosted by the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri from Nov. 20 to Nov. 21. The Panthers finished second overall, just behind the host team, Missouri. The tournament began with star freshman swimmer Silvia Scalia, who broke the school record when leading off with the 100 backstroke in the 400 medley relay with a time of 53.3. Sophomore swimmer Jennifer Alfani also helped the Panthers with her personal best time of 23.31 in the 50 freestyle event.

Head Coach Randy Horner, was pleased with his team’s performance on the first day of the invite. “We had a solid day today. We gained a lot of experience for our freshmen and had some best times that were good to see this season. Our depth is what excites me most about today. All of our relays were solid from A to D and that shows our program’s growth,” Horner said.

On Friday, Nov. 21, the second day of the tournament, the Panthers sat in second place with 182.3 points. The Panthers set the new school record for the 200 medley relay posting a time of 1:41.78. Scalia, senior Kiara Anderson, Alfani, and sophomore Jennifer Deist were able to work together to help break the record.

Senior Johanna Gustafsdottir finished in second place in the 400 individual medley. With a time of 4:14.86, the Iceland native ended up with the second best time in FIU swimming history. “I feel like we had a stronger day top to bottom today. The ladies relaxed a bit more and had fun. That’s the key to swimming fast. It has to be fun, and that’s where the team effort comes in,” said Horner.

Entering Saturday, Nov. 22, the Panthers were in second place yet again with 414 points. Panthers diver freshman Rebecca Quesnell and sophomore Lilly Kaufmann contributed to the efforts. Quesnell’s best score, 248.85, came in the finals and Kaufmann’s, 232.40 came in the prelims. Both placed into the FIU record books for their respective events.

Once again, Scalia showed why she won Conference USA swimmer of the week two weeks ago. Scalia moved into second in FIU history in the 200 backstroke with a time of 1:55.75 in the prelims. She bested her prelim time during the finals, clocking a 1:55.55 time and finished second in that event.

Gustafsdottir showed no mercy in the 200 breaststroke, finishing with a personal record and first in school history for her event. Junior Valerie Ingels had no problem breaking the school record in the 200 butterfly. Finishing with a time of 1:58.43, she broke the record and finished second in her event.

On the third and final day alone, a combined eleven swimmers and divers ended up in the FIU record books. Horner was very happy with how his team performed at the Mizzou Invite.

“We competed well this week. We beat some very good teams from the Big 10 and Big 12 and that’s a feather in our cap. We have a lot of work to do still to achieve our goals, but this meet was a great mid season evaluation,” said Horner.

The Panthers proved to be relentless ending up with 586 points edging the University of Nebraska and the University of Illinois from the Big 10, and West Virginia University from the Big 12.

The Panthers don’t compete again until they host instate team University of North Florida on Wednesday, Dec. 17. They hope to use their strong performance at the Mizzou Invite to propel them to a (5-0) record.
Women’s basketball searching for a win after three game losing streak

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The Panthers hosted the Cleveland State University Vikings on Sunday, Nov. 23, in their third regular season game. With this third game of the season, however, also came the team’s third loss.

The Panthers came out strong, opening the first half with a 6-0 lead. Cleveland State quickly climbed back into the game and for some time the two teams matched up relatively evenly.

The game was lost in the first half from behind the arch. Cleveland State shot 66.7 percent from the three, knocking down six of their nine attempts from the field. Senior guard Kiersten Green alone hit five of those threes and shot a perfect five for five.

Sophomore forward Kiandre’a Pound does a layup against Cleveland State on Sunday, Nov. 23. The Panthers lost 65-73.

The Vikings cemented their chokehold on the game in the first half, after holding FIU without a field goal in five minutes. The Panthers went into the halftime break trailing 42-28.

The story of the night, however, was in the performance of redshirt freshman forward Kiandre’a Pound, who recorded her first collegiate double-double with 24 points and 14 rebounds. This influence appeared to have gained new life. Pound lead the way, laying in the first points of the half. After the Vikings knocked down another three pointer, a back and forth exchange of baskets ensued. The Panthers, at this point, were able to successfully match and even exceed the intensity that the Vikings had brought in the first half.

With about 15:09 left in the game, Pound hit two free throws to pull FIU within single digits. This sparked a 14-6 run that would eventually pull them within one. ‘It felt pretty good [to record a double-double] but we still lost the game,’ said Pound, “We wanted to win, we’re 0-3. We’ve been losing over and over.”

The Panthers pulled within three one last time after three consecutive baskets scored by junior guard Taylor Shadle. Still, even with solid second half performances from Shade and Pound, the Panthers could not erase the lead that the Vikings had built up in the final minutes of the game when they once again pulled away.

“I thought it was a nice effort by a lot of people but you know we did not play smart down the stretch,” said Head Coach Cindy Russo.

Despite opening the game with back-to-back layups, senior forward Tynia McKinzie barely saw any action in the second half, spending the half on the bench.

FIU will continue their four-game home stretch this week with the commencement of their annual Thanksgiving Classic. They are scheduled to play Arizona State University, and University of Toledo or University of Virginia, where they will be on the hunt for their first win of the season.

Panthers rally to force overtime, but fall to Predators in shootout, losing 3-2

TNS STAFF

The Florida Panthers will have to wait at least another year to experience what it is to party like it’s 1999.

In Miami City, at least, where Saturday night they continued a victory drought that extends to the last millennium with a 3-2 loss to the Nashville Predators in a shootout.

Rookie scoring sensation Filip Forsberg scored the winner in the fourth round of the shootout after the Panthers had mounted little in the way of offense most of the night, and Pekka Rinne stopped their first 28 shots. One of Luongo’s toughest saves was on a Predators rush in the second period while the Panthers were on a power play in the second period. Earlier, he gloved a one-timer by James Neal on Nashville’s high-scoring top line.

The Predators’ penalty-kill unit did a nice job of helping him hold off a minute and a half before the second intermission was a freak bank-shot. Colin Wilson flipped it over from behind the Panthers net and it ricocheted off in the back of the Luongo, apparently off his helmet.

Nashville seemingly had the game iced with seven minutes remaining when wide-open Matt Cullen took a centering pass out front from Derek Roy and fired it home on a shot Luongo said deflected off a defenseman.

The Panthers have not won here since Dec. 11, 1999. They have now lost seven times and tied twice since then.

The Panthers went 2-1-1 on a grueling four-game trip that included visits to three of the top four teams in the Western Conference. They begin a four-game homestand Monday against Minnesota.

The Panthers nearly pulled off a stunner. They were seemingly headed for lackluster defeat before desperation goals by Rocco Grimaldi and Jimmy Hayes in the final minute of the third period forced overtime. The Panthers had mounted little offense in the preceding 59 minutes.

What Florida had to celebrate this night was a remarkable performance by goalie Roberto Luongo, who almost single-handedly kept them in the game.

Under a relentless Predators assault, Luongo stopped 48 shots. The one that finally got past him just a minute and a half before the second intermission was a freak bank-shot. Colin Wilson flipped it over from behind the Panthers net and it ricocheted off in the back of the Luongo, apparently off his helmet.

The Panthers have been tough on the West, coming in 5-2-1. But they looked every bit like a team that had had trouble keeping pace with the energy of the Predators, among the leaders in the West have been tough on everyone in Bridgestone Arena, where they are now 7-1-1.
**Homesick for the holidays**

Feeling homesick is one of the hardest things a lot of us will experience away from home. Especially during the holidays.

When leaving the nest and flying into freedom, we leave behind a lot: our loved ones, our friends, our parents who are always there to comfort us on a bad day or our dads who can cook up our favorite meal.

Once you leave for college you must create new traditions with new friends in a new environment. It’s your chance to do things your way.

Being around the few things that remind you of home is not the best remedy for homesickness.

Your best bet is to make a new apartment or dorm into a home away from home. It’s easy to run away from the unfamiliar, but the real challenge you will experience is to face your fears and cope with them.

In this case, you could go out and meet new people on campus or in your neighborhood. Making new friends will make it much easier to go through rough times, and you won’t feel so lonely during the holidays while you’re away from home.

I never cared much for holidays when I lived in Spain because my parents treated them as regular days. I feel we should be grateful for our families every day, not only on Christmas.

But in the United States, this is not the case.

There are Christmas-themed decorations and songs in every retailer and grocery store. Commercially on TV show happy families spending time together and feasting at a dinner table.

Even though these families are paid actors, it saddens me knowing my family is far away. It is because of these cheerful holiday ads and jingles during the holidays that I miss my parents, my brother and my pets a little more.

Thanks to Skype and several messaging apps, I am able to stay in touch with my family and talk to them at anytime. This helps me cope with holiday homesickness.

Often times I’ll go out with friends and participate in several group exercise classes at the Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation Center.

Cooking also distracts me from missing my family no matter what time of the year.

I enjoy experimenting with baking and every once in a while I make some really good brownies when I’m missing them the most.

The University offers different opportunities to meet new people before and during the holidays. For instance, on Wednesday, Nov. 26, at 4 p.m. the Multicultural Programs and Services LGBTQIA Initiatives is hosting a Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner in Wolfe University Center room 155.

This is a great chance for college students who have no family to spend Thanksgiving with, to make new friends in school.

Being alone during the holidays can be hard to deal with, but hard times provide the opportunity to grow and possibly have a wonderful experience.

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**Florida’s college grads have lower student loans**

**FRUSM STAFF**

With the holiday spirit of Thanksgiving in the air, students will get to “trot” for some turkey at this year’s 27th Annual BBC Recreation Turkey Trot on Nov. 26.

Hosted by the BBC Student Affairs Campus Recreation Center, students will have the opportunity to burn calories through different competitive races at the campus.

There will be a men’s and women’s division composed of a three-mile run and a stretch station on site. Participants will meet at the Wolfe University Center Panther Plaza in front of the WUC building. Those who will run must arrive at 3 p.m. and those who will walk will meet at 3:30 p.m.

First place winners in each category will take home a Thanksgiving turkey and a gift basket. However, the first five runner-up’s in each category will also be recipients of the turkey prize.

The prizes are limited to one person per household since the competitions are open to the community.

There will be a fruit and water station, and a stretch station on site. To register for the event, competitors need to register at active.com and enter keywords: “FIU BBC Turkey Trot.”

There will be a packet pickup on race day at the plaza from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. Students enter free while non-FIU community members must pay a $5 fee.

Participants must be 16 or older.

To assist the less fortunate, FIU students, trotters are encouraged to donate to the Student Health Services’ FIU Student Food Pantry.

Items needed are canned fruits, canned veggies, canned meat, tuna, peanut butter, rice, and pasta or any non-perishable items. Their donation box will be found at the Panther Plaza.

John Harris, a junior biology major, said that the Turkey Trot will be a great way to burn some calories before a feast.

“I think it’s a different way to celebrate Thanksgiving, especially since we all feast on that day,” Harris said. “It could be good to take a run before munching on all the food.”

Participants are encouraged to arrive on time. Sneakers and comfortable clothing are recommended. For more information, please contact the BBC Rec Center at (305) 919-4701.

**TNS STAFF**

Graduates of Florida colleges are less likely to be saddled with student loans when they graduate, a new study shows.

Nearly 4,400 less than the $28,400 national average.

Florida’s comparatively low tuition at public universities helps many students avoid or take out fewer loans, said Debbie Cochrane, research director at the Institute for College Access & Success. Each Florida public school sets its own tuition and fees, but prices averaged about $6,100 for the 2012-2013 school year. That’s about $2,800 a year less than the national average of $8,893 at a public university.

The state’s Bright Futures scholarships -- awarded to high school seniors for academic excellence -- also helps by preventing Florida students from taking on loans.

Many of Florida’s public universities also award scholarships to help students in addition to the state and federal financial aid they receive, said Cochrane, of the Institute for College Access & Success.

For example, gave grants and scholarships to 50 percent of its incoming freshmen, amounting to an average award of $3,125 in the 2012-2013 school year; accounting for federal data.

Meanwhile, FAU awarded 37 percent of its incoming students scholarships and grants that averaged $2,935 in the 2012-2013 school year.

“Tuition is much lower here than what you see around the country,” said Sean Smith, director of the University of Central Florida’s Institute for Economic Competitiveness. The state’s Bright Futures scholarships -- awarded to high school seniors for academic excellence -- also helps by preventing Florida students from taking on loans, he said.

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