Police keeps sex assault, crimes low

The new Annual Security report by FIU Police Department shows that University crime rates have remained relatively low in recent years, a fact that previously told Student Media.

MyFIU website, app receive more modern look

The commonly used MyFIU website and mobile version underwent their first phase of design enhancements this fall semester. Launched in spring 2007, the website was created by the Division of Information and Technology to change the way students used the Panthertech system, rather than having to pull up different web pages to look for financial information and class schedules.

The website has allowed users to do this, as well as to register for classes and enter their FIU e-mail, all in one place. To revamp the user-experience, the division began planning, designing and developing the changes to the site and mobile app eight months ago, said Robert Grillo, vice president and chief information officer of the Division of IT.

The changes were introduced to users on Sunday, Oct. 26. Two days later, FIU was awarded the Cybersecurity Leadership and Innovation Award in the Education category by the Center for Digital Government for its cybersecurity efforts.

Some of these changes include links that provide University information and news and other tools and resources without the need of having to log into the website. Panther Links have been redesigned to display the most widely used direct links.

For the mobile app version, which was launched in 2011, PantherTrack service was introduced to users on Sunday, Oct. 26. Two days later, FIU was awarded the Cybersecurity Leadership and Innovation Award in the Education category by the Center for Digital Government for its cybersecurity efforts.

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To determine this, police look into the length of the relationship, the type of relationship and the frequency of interaction. Stalking is categorized as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause them to fear for his or her safety or suffer substantial psychological injury.

The new system is much more efficient than the old system has been completely removed. The new system is much more efficient than the old system has been completely removed.

The current system was first implemented last October, and there were some minor issues while transitioning to the new system: students were receiving duplicate messages.

Aiken says they didn’t want to risk the new system crashing or glitching. So, the email would send twice.

Training and experience in learning the system has fixed this problem.

“The email system has been streamlined and the old system has been completely removed. The new system is much more efficient than the old one, and has more methods of sending out messages.”

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The system, called FIU Alert, works by sending out messages in multiple ways to reach a student.

There’s multiple methods of communication: text messages and voicemails to cell phones, emails to FIU accounts, alerts to the official FIU Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites, sites and forums, calls, texts, the new LED outdoor billboards at MMC and Biscayne Bay Campus, and VoIP phones in every classroom and office,” said Amy Aiken, the director of emergency management.

The system, called FIU Alert, works by sending out messages in multiple ways to reach a student.

In light of danger in other campuses, FIU Alert system offers relief for students

The shooting at Florida State University last week shows the need and importance of a functioning alert system for universities. The alert system is an important feature to any university. The system, called FIU Alert, works by sending out messages in multiple ways to reach a student.

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Annual crime report shows lower crime rates

CRIME, PAGE 1

emotional distress. In 2013, there were three reported cases of domestic violence, one case of dating violence and four cases of stalking. All of these occurred at MMC.

Meanwhile, Casas said that decreases in thefts, drug usage and other “opportune crimes” can be attributed to the “direct correlation” between crime statistics and the number of officers on duty.

“I have more officers,” he said. “I can put more people on foot patrol, direct patrols in certain parking garages or parking lots — it does have a residual effect on the opportunistic crimes,” he said. “I think we’re at a point where our staffing levels are starting to have a consistent impact on our crime. These are good numbers.”

But it’s not just quantity that plays a part. Casas claimed that the quality of police work is another factor. “Those numbers are directly reflective of the professional hard work and service that our police officers provide our community here,” he said, later adding that the recent negative gun incidents are frowned upon by the department.

Casas emphasized the importance of looking at the number of incidents as opposed to percentages. “Think about it: three out of 10 is 30 percent. That’s a big percentage. But if you go from [three] to seven, that’s not a lot of cases when you’re talking about burglaries,” he said.

To Casas, the numbers won’t change how the police department works to combat crime.

“We will not relax — we will continue to maintain the level of policing that we’ve had,” he said.

Students pioneer project to protect against sea level rise

HOUSING, PAGE 8

She recommends to others to be involved on this pressing issue now and later on. “It would be nice to be a part of a team in the future that needs to deal with this issue,” Echeverri said.

Professors Marta Canaves and Marilyn Nepomche, explain that the idea of creating the multi-faceted, interactive exhibition is part of the interest in raising public awareness and encouraging community engagement in the advancement of a city that gives MyFIU a new look

Academic Advisor Paige Johnson said that the alterations have been useful, especially since she is both a University employee and a doctoral student. As an academic advisor, she said that the changes has made it easier for her to direct students to their transcripts, for example.

“It’s a little more cleaner so you can direct students to ‘transcripts are here,’ as opposed to going through a bunch of different links,” said Johnson. “Students just want to see [everything] right there. They don’t want to have to search. When they search, they don’t care anymore.”

Also, she said that she has encouraged her students to use the mobile app to stay on track of their information.

“Should have anywhere in the world, go to the mobile app, register for your classes, hit and enroll and you’re done.”

Echeverri also said that study for the project was very demanding because of the amount of research and work that it needed to be produced. However, it left her with an immense satisfaction when looking at the final product.

In relation to the exhibition, multiple lectures and panel discussions are planned to take place at the CGM, at FIU, and at the Miami Center for Architecture + Design (MCAD) in the coming months.

“The environmental challenges ahead are substantial, and their effect, not only on our immediate community, but world-wide, demand our attention and our active engagement. We hope that this exhibition will advance both,” Nepomche said.

University’s alert system brings sense of calm to students

ALERT, PAGE 1

been streamlined and the old system has been completely removed,” Aiken said. “The new system is more efficient than the old one, and has more methods of sending out messages.”

Every semester, system components are tested. So far, the new system has been effectively relayed messages to students.

Aiken said that the most important part is that students feel safe.

“Those numbers are directly reflective of the professional hard work and service that our police officers provide our community here,” he said, later adding that the recent negative gun incidents are frowned upon by the department.

Casas emphasized the importance of looking at the number of incidents as opposed to percentages. “Think about it: three out of 10 is 30 percent. That’s a big percentage. But if you go from [three] to seven, that’s not a lot of cases when you’re talking about burglaries,” he said.

To Casas, the numbers won’t change how the police department works to combat crime.

“We will not relax — we will continue to maintain the level of policing that we’ve had,” he said.
Greedy middle-men threaten modern research

AMID BENNAIM
Contributing Writer
opinion@fiusm.com

Most FIU students have no idea that there is a fundamental problem with the current academic system, which puts a very serious limit on how much information academics have access to. As a matter of fact, for nearly all majors outside of the hard sciences and mathematics, most students would never even come to notice that peer-reviewed academic journals are almost impossible to access to all but a few. The reason for such ignorance is that FIU spends thousands of dollars on yearly memberships for all sorts of journals and databases and most students have no idea. The price, however, is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the failed system in charge of publishing academic papers.

The hardest pill to swallow when it comes to scientific and mathematical journals is that they are very expensive. While students attending FIU and other universities have "free" access through their libraries, it is impossibly expensive to do research anywhere else. These journals, which should be as inexpensive as possible so that more people can access them, are crucial to understanding modern research and keeping up with rapidly-advancing fields. The reason that these journals are so expensive is that the publishers take advantage of a system in which big institutions are willing to dish out a lot of cash. The job of the publishers is to make it so stressful to apply. I have considered that it is probably a tactic for evaluating a student's training, or (cynically) that colleges have no point, except for being fun; they actually provide the circumstances to hone passion. Which brings me back to the importance of college environments. Universities offer the choice of courses, and endorse plenty of student clubs and organizations. They are, ideally, where you can develop skills—academic, artistic, or otherwise. After all, everyone is on his or her own path to self-awareness.

FRANK & IRENE

In contrast, there are other people who try and enjoy a range of activities, but fail to advance after a certain point. Let's call them "dabbler." You're a dabbler if you have mastered two or three choirs on piano, were once told you had great potential by a former soccer coach, and the doodles that you make in class are exceptionally detailed. Parents of dabbler enroll their children in dance classes, little league sports, and piano lessons only to realize that the burning sensation at the pit of their child's stomach is not passion, but an ardent desire to quit. Sometime between the beginning of middle school and the end of freshman year, parents stop pressuring their child to choose a prodigious skill. It's okay as long as you make good grades, right? Wrong. The college admission system becomes more selective every year. It is the unrealistic assumption that college students should all be gifted. If that were the case, a collegiate experience would become dispensable. I do not pretend to understand why colleges make it so stressful to apply. I have considered that it is probably a tactic for evaluating a student's training, or (cynically) that colleges have no point, except for being fun; they actually provide the circumstances to hone passion. Which brings me back to the importance of college environments. Universities offer the choice of courses, and endorse plenty of student clubs and organizations. They are, ideally, where you can develop skills—academic, artistic, or otherwise. After all, everyone is on his or her own path to self-awareness.

SIMON SAYS PUBLISH THE BEACON

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The Fall 2014 semester has finally come to an end for the students, faculty and staff of Florida International University. As an Editorial Board of FIU Student Media, we would like to say goodbye to you all and wish you all the best up through this semester, and that we look forward to providing more fresh content in spring 2015.

Most importantly, we want to wish the best of luck to several members of FIUSM that will be leaving us this semester, as the season of graduation approaches. Your service to FIUSM has been greatly appreciated and significant to the improvement of our quality. We hope that your skills and knowledge take you far into your career and that you achieve everything you put your minds to. Know that wherever you go, we will always believe in you, and we will always expect the best from you.

Good luck to everyone these upcoming weeks of finals and have a wonderful winter break.

We'll write to you again next semester.

Wednesday, December 3, 2014
LoKal, home of good beers, locally bought food and organic dog treats

Burgers and beers. Cassette tapes and wine corks. Graffiti. It sounds like the progression of a friends’ night out—food, music, alcohol and vandalism—in a decade when cassette tapes still existed. The reality, though, is better. It’s a place where music booms from 21st century speakers and the cassette tapes support the long bar.

The restaurant is located at 3190 Commodore Plaza, Coconut Grove, right around the corner from the neighborhood’s local veterinary. The outside is reminiscent of a dinner, but the high chairs and tables and the graffiti on the sidewalk tell another story.

LoKal is home to Wynwood’s artsy designs, the Grove’s health-oriented lifestyle and Miami’s mixed cultures. The locale is better described as a “pub, bar, inn, restaurant, meeting place,” by the black graffiti letters over a white stereo system.

The restaurant and its decorations are mostly made with recycled materials. The chairs and the stools were items collected from restaurants that were throwing them away and several of the tables were made out of wooden pallets. Apart from the recycled decorations, LoKal strives to support the community around it by going local. Everything is bought from relationships made with local farmers, providing high-end ingredients that are utilized to make its products from scratch in the kitchen.

Apart from exhibiting a laid-back ambiance, LoKal’s design and character are a representation of the owner’s lifestyle, an alum of the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. I was able to meet with Matthew Kuscher, who was more than willing to schedule an interview with me.

“I have a soft spot for FIU,” Kuscher told me. “I was kind of a troublemaker and when I went to FIU it did change my life.”

After visiting his best friend in Seattle, who was very eco-friendly, Kuscher decided that he wanted to live environmentally conscious. He created LoKal based on this belief.

“Upcycling is really what I cared about, I wanted to [have] obviously a cool feel to it, but the first priority was trying to be something that was gonna help spread the word.”

The restaurant does not only provide meals with quality ingredients for its human customers, but for their dogs as well.

“Upcycling is really what I cared about, I wanted to make something that was gonna help spread the word.”

With a staff of about 42 members, LoKal begins its day at 6 a.m., preparing the products for a busy day. The restaurant usually gets between 200 to 300 covers per day, with people even waiting in line for one of the restaurant’s exotic plates.

“I’m obviously very big on shopping local, buying local and supporting local,” said Kuscher. “The only thing I buy that’s not local is cars and electronics and that’s because it’s, I think, pretty much impossible to find a Florida-based car or stereo system.”

Although I still haven’t gone for either of those, I have tried The Classic and the Fidy-Fidy. Both of them have great flavor, but my favorite part is going half-and-half with sweet potato fries and normal fries and dipping them in the two sauces that accompany every dish.

The Classic is self-explanatory, it’s the typical American burger, but with sharp Wisconsin cheddar. The Fidy-Fidy is more exotic, with the meat being half ground beef and half ground bacon, topped with even more bacon and sweet onion marmalade. If you’re a bacon person like me, go with the Fidy-Fidy.

A very interesting thing that LoKal does, is that on the menu, it states the city where some of the ingredients that they use come from—sometimes it even mentions the farm’s name. So if you’re not certain that you’re getting local and high-end ingredients, look it up.

Some of the best-selling plates include the LoKal burger, the chicken and waffles, the key lime pie and the doggie chicken and rice. The restaurant does not only provide meals with quality ingredients for its human customers, but for their dogs as well.

“We’re an extremely dog-friendly restaurant... I like going places with my dogs and most places don’t like you bringing [your] dogs,” said Kuscher. “There’s [also] a vet around the corner that’s been there forever and we thought it’d be really cool to get these sick dogs coming out of the doctor to put a smile on their face [so] we make them organic dog biscuits every day.”

Apart from the great food LoKal also offers a large...
**TNS STAFF**

It’s the rush to the finish line, and the start of serious campaigning for awards season knudos, as Oscar talk makes their way to movie screens and more than 15-odd if you happen to live in New York or Los Angeles, where the Academy Awards contenders must be booked for a one-week run before Dec. 31. There’s something for everybody, sort of, although the themes are darker, the offerings sparse than in previous end-of-year lineups. Here’s what we have to look forward to:

**THE BABADOOK** (Dec. 5) “It’s a true story, it can’t be heard screaming a short time after the labyrinthine bowels of the titular edifice, designed in ancient times to insure that no one, ever, gets out alive.

**DIPLOMACY** (Dec. 12) Imagine the City of Light without the Louvre, sans Eiffel Tower, Hôtel de Ville’s command to destroy Nazi-occupied Paris before the Allies rolled in is the subject of Ebersol Schindler’s historical part de deux, with Andre Dossollier as the Swedish diplomat who enlists the German general, played by Niels Arestrup, not to proceed with the plan.

**EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS** (Dec. 12) What strange accent do you think Christian Bale spats with his Ridley Scott’s biblical epic, playing Moses to Joel Edgerton’s Ramses in the CG-crazy Old Testament remake?

“Remember this. I am prepared to fight. For eternity,” this warior Moses cautions the Egyptian king, just before the sea parts and chariots chase 600,000 Israelites being led by an Oscar-winner to a new land.

**TOP FIVE** (Dec. 12) Chris Rock stars and wrote and directs this, a very clever, romantic comedy about a famous comic star who wants to be taken seriously, and then a beautiful newspaper reporter Rosario Dawson enter the picture to see what he is made of.

**WILD** (Dec. 12) Reese Witherspoon is still the front-runner, or front-trekker, in this best actress award race, starring as Cheryl Strayed in the adaptation of her best-selling memoir about a 1,100-mile solo hike on the Pacific Crest Trail, trying to right a life that has gone woefully wrong in the director of Dallas Buyers Club.

**THE HORRIBLES: BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES** (Dec. 17) Martin Freeman is the furry-footed hero in Peter Jackson’s final 1 1/2-R Tolkien adaptation, leading the Company of Thorin out of the Lonely Mountain and into an epic dustup with orcs, wargs, elves, dwarfs, and men.

**ANNIE** (Dec. 19) Will Smith is one of the principals behind this new take on the 1977 musical based on Harold Gray’s comic strip, Little Orphan Annie Beasts of the Southern Wild’s Oscar sweetheart Quvenzhane Wallis has the title role and Jamie Foxx is the Diddy Warbucks-ian Will Stuck’s Orphan Annie in a role for mayor who thinks it would be good PR if he has his photo taken with a cute waif. Carmen Diaz and Rose Byrne also star.

**NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 3: SECRET OF THE TOMB** (Dec. 19) The third and final installment in the hit series in which a former museum guard (Ben Stiller) loots and nobs with figures from the past. This one has something to do with the waning magic powers of the Statues of Akhenaten, Ben Kingsley, Owen Wilson, Steve Coogan, Ricky Gervais, and the late Robin Williams pop up to help, or hinder or steal a few laughs.

**BIG EYES** (Dec. 25) The story of celebratedetch artist Walter and Margaret Keane, famous in the 1950s, for their mass-produced paintings of ory-eyed children and clowns. Walter claimed the artwork as his, but Margaret did most of the brushwork. And hence, a big, messy divorce. Christoph Waltz and Amy Adams are the Keane’s, and Tim Burton, who explored the themes of schlock artistry in Ed Wood, directs.

**THE GAMBLER** (Dec. 25) Mark Wahlberg is a college professor with a bad gambling jones and a student (Brie Larson) who wants to seduce him, in Rise of the Planet of the Apes director Rupert Wyatt’s tough-looking Los Angeles drama. John Goodman, Jessica Lange, and Michael Kenneth Williams also ante in.

**THE IMITATION GAME** (Dec. 25) Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Alan Turing, the British mathematician and logician who cracked the Nazis’ Enigma code in World War II, and whose life in subsequent years, when he was outed as a homosexual, turned cruelly fizzy.

**THE INTERVIEW** (Dec. 25) Already condemned in North Korea, a comedy about two talk show hosts and their meeting with the Marshal of the CIA in a plot to assassinate the Supreme Leader. This could start a war.

**TO THE WOODS** (Dec. 25) The James Lapine/Stephen Sondheim Broadway smash gets the Rob Marshall (Chicago, Nine) movie musical treatment ... you wouldn’t be sure to find it from the trailer, which doesn’t even offer a snippet of a song. With Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, Anne Kendrick, Chris Pine, Tracey Ullman, Christine Baranski, and Johnny Depp singing and dancing their way through a Grimm universe. At least, we think that’s what they’re going to do.

**UNBROKEN** (Dec. 25) A World War II survival drama from director Angelina Jolie, her second feature. (Her first, In the Land of Blood and Honey, also dealt with the horrors of war.) British newcomer Jack O’Connell stars as the real life Olympic track star Louis Zamperini, who survived a plane crash in the Pacific, was adrift for 47 days, and then was taken prisoner by the Japanese. The Coen Brothers get screenplay credit.

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**Merging good food with local culture**

**LOKAL, PAGE 4**

number of beers from local breweries. Their beer director, David Rodríguez, is tasked with creating the beer list and is constantly bringing in new material—draft, bottles, new locations with different environments, which he didn’t specify in detail.

LoKal’s clientele ranges from dog-lovers to grown-ups, from single to couples to parents, and more innovation in Miami, we look forward to: 19) The third and final installment of The Pyramid...
OFF FOOTBALL

Offseason needed to ripen young talent

The 2014 college football regular season has come and gone, and for the third year in a row, FIU has been left out of a bowl game. The Panthers finished third in Conference USA with a 4-8 record, 3-5 in conference. The highlight is a 3-win improvement from last year’s painful 1-11 season.

The Panthers lost four games in 2014 by three points or less. Had they won just two of those close games, they could have reached six wins and become eligible for a bowl game for only the third time in school history.

Head Coach Ron Turner will be entering his third season at the helm of the program. In his first two seasons, Turner has led the Panthers to a 5-19 record.

The Panthers have 11 seniors that will not be back next year. On the offensive line, they will be losing starting center Donald Senat. Senat started all twelve games for the Panthers in 2014. The Panthers will also be without the services of receiver Glenn Coleman. Coleman started eight games for the Panthers and played in all twelve. He was the second receiving option for freshman quarterback Alex McGough. Coleman finished his senior year with 23 receptions for 468 yards and three touchdowns. His 85-yard touchdown reception against UAB was the longest pass play for the Panthers in 2014.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Panthers will be losing three key contributors from their 2014 roster: defensive end Giovanni Francois, safety Demarkus Perkins and safety Justin Hailey. Francois played in all twelve games for the Panthers, recording 36 tackles and five sacks on the year. Perkins started and played in 11 games; he led the team with 67 tackles. Hailey also started and played in 11 games; he recorded 45 tackles and 3 pass break-ups on the year.

The Panthers hope they can hang on to their best defensive/special teams player for one more year; corner back Richard Leonard. As a redshirt junior, Leonard is eligible to enter the NFL draft a year early if he so desires. After the year he had in 2014, that idea may not be too far fetched. As a corner back, Leonard had five interceptions and a total of 144 return yards on those picks. He scored three total touchdowns on defense. In the return game, Leonard was ranked in the nation with 5.7 yards per return. He was even able to break one for a score in the final game of the season at the University of North Texas.

The Panther offense has a lot to look forward to in 2015. They are returning an arsenal of young talent at the skill positions.

McGough showed sparks of greatness in his freshman campaign. He finished the 2014 season with 1680 passing yards, 14 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. It will be interesting to see how McGough will improve with an entire offseason in the starting role.

Mcgough’s favorite target was sophomore tight end Jonnu Smith. Smith led all division 1 tight ends with 61 receptions for 710 yards and eight touchdowns. Smith was not named a finalist for the 2014 Mackey Award, an honor given annually to the most outstanding tight end in college football. He will likely be on all preseason watchlists for the 2015 Mackey award.

On the ground, the Panthers saw some promise in freshman running back Alex Gardner. Gardner was the team’s leading rusher before having to miss the final four games due to a shoulder injury.

The Panthers hope that their returning talent and an influx of new recruits can get the program back on the winning track.

Jorge Corrales | The Beacon

Prejudice against gays and lesbians hurts women’s collegiate basketball

In an age when gay marriage has gained acceptance across the United States, when the Apple CEO, and an NFL and NBA player have come out, and when the WNBA’s gay fans, homophobia remains endemic in women’s college basketball. It is an issue that has plagued the sport for decades, but few talk about it.

Cindy Russo, who has coached women’s basketball at Florida International University for 40 years, won more than 700 games and seen the sport make great strides, said homophobia remains as much a problem today as it was decades ago.

Parents of recruits still sometimes ask college coaches: “Do you have any gay players on your team?” Heterosexual coaches routinely prey on parents’ fears and religious beliefs, using homophobia as a recruiting tactic to steer high school players away from unmarried female coaches.

“There is a fear among parents that if their son or daughter is around a gay person, it is going to make them gay, like it’s a contagious disease,” Russo said. “There is still so much prejudice and ignorance out there. Male coaches, and some women, will say to parents, ‘Do you know so-and-so’s gay?’ It just takes that to put a little doubt in their minds. And it works.

“I’ve had the question asked many times, how I feel about gay players on the team, or if I have any gay players on my team. I tell them, ‘Honestly, it’s not something I talk about. I don’t tell me if there are gay people on my team, they are respectable and have high integrity, and to me, that’s all that matters.’ I’m to an age where you just get tired of it.”

Whether the coach is a lesbian or just perceived as one, the stigma is the same. That helps explain why out of 350 Division I women’s basketball coaches, only one is openly gay. Sherrill Murrell at Portland (Or.) State.

In summer 2009, the team’s media relations director asked Murrell if she’d like a photo of her family in the media guide. She thought, “Sure, why not? What’s the big deal? The people who know me know I’m gay, anyway.” She figured it was time to stop hiding. She submitted a photo of herself, her partner, and their twin daughters. The word was out, and news hit the media. No Division I coach had ever publicly declared herself gay, and none have since. She found most people surprisingly accepting.

“For many years, I stayed in the closet because I heard horror stories about recruiting,” Murrell said by phone. “I saw older coaches in the closet and just thought that’s the way it’s supposed to be. The world around us is changing, but our profession is still in the Dark Ages. I was terrified, but I took the plunge, and thankfully, landed in safe water.

“Honestly, I have not had one negative experience. I have had support from 80-year-old boosters, my university, everyone. I know that geographically, it’s easier in Portland than some places in the South, but I’m here to tell lesbian coaches out there, ‘We’ll be OK. Let go of the fear.’

“It was unbelievably liberating to take the white elephant out of the room. Nobody has to tip-toe around me anymore. Too many damn good coaches have left because of the homophobia. They just couldn’t do a double life, and that breaks my heart.”

One longtime Division 1 coach, who requested anonymity, left the profession because she grew tired of the discrimination. She is a lesbian, in her mid-50s, and recalled a typical recruiting trip as a Big Ten assistant. She was with the head coach in the living room of a highly-touted recruit in Detroit. The recruit’s mother asked the head coach, “You don’t have those kind of people working for you, do you?” The coach replied, “Absolutely not. I would not stand for it.”

The gay assistant felt a pit in her stomach. But she stayed silent. For three decades.

“We felt we had to hide to keep our jobs,” she said.

The anti-gay sentiment is not always that blatant, but the undercurrent is still there, and has driven generations of female coaches out of the business or deeper into the closet. Often, the homophobia is thinly veiled, spoken in code words all too familiar within the sport’s inner circles.

Heterosexual coaches on the recruiting trail flaunt their straightness with photos of spouses and children, boasting that their programs are steeped in “family values” while insinuating that a competing coach is gay or runs a gay-tolerant program that does not foster a “family culture.”

When Robin Pingeton was introduced as head coach at the University of Missouri in April 2010, she had her husband and 3-year-old son by her side. She said: “I’m a Christian that happens to be a coach. ... I’m very blessed to have my staff here. This is something very unique, I think, for Division I women’s basketball to have a staff that the entire staff is married with kids. Family is important to us, and we live it every day.”

Homophobia and the exodus of lesbian
coaches might at least partly explain why so many men are being hired to coach women’s sports. When Title IX legislation passed in 1972, requiring equal sports opportunities for women, more than 90 percent of female college sports teams were controlled by women. In 2013, it was less than 10 percent, according to separate studies by Brooklyn College professors Vivian Acosta and Linda Jean Carpenter, and the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota.

"The numbers do not lie," said Mary Jo Kane, director of the Tucker Center. "It certainly is not the case that there is only one woman in major women’s basketball."

"That fact alone, that only one has come out, is such a powerful and symbolic statement," Kane said. "It’s going to take a very well-established, well-respected Division I coach to come out. Someone is going to have to be the Jackie Robinson of women’s college coaching."

Murrell had no intention of being a trailblazer. "I didn’t want to be Googled and the first thing that comes up is ‘Only Lesbian Coach,’" Murrell said. "But after getting so many heartbreaking emails and calls from coaches, saying things like, ‘I want to be out, but I’m not even out to my grandmother,’ or ‘I want to be out but my head coach is homophobic,’ I realized I am helping make change."

High school and AAU coaches say homophobia in recruiting remains rampant.

"Oh, yeah, that definitely is a big issue," said Miguel Diaz, co-founder of the Miami Suns, a girls’ elite basketball program that has recruited out of 180 high schools of college players including WNBA stars Sylvia Fowles and Eriana Larkins. "Now more than ever. Coaches’ salaries are escalating, stakes are higher, the pressure to win is greater, so the gloves come off and the mudslinging gets dirty."

Pat Griffin, professor emeritus at University of Massachusetts-Amherst, has been conducting LGBT sports education workshops for more than 20 years. She has seen as much change as she would like.

"I call it the glass closet," Griffin said. "Coaches in the closet, but everyone knows their parents’ fears. Everyone knows they’re there. If you’ve lived your whole life believing it’s necessary to conceal your private life from everybody in your professional life, it’s really difficult to make that change and believe it’s going to be OK if you come out.

"We’ve reached a point where older coaches who are coming out are saying that you have to be closeted in order to stay in the profession and be successful in a sad way have become an obstacle to younger coaches coming out."

Griffin was hired by Penn State to meet with the athletic department in 2007, when women’s basketball coach Rene Portland was forced to resign after 27 years at the school amid allegations that she did not tolerate gay players on her team.

"Portland had a longstanding policy: No Drinking. No Drugs. No Lesbians," Griffin said. "She was accused of forcing gay players off the team. She was purchased for the Chicago Sun-Times; she said: ‘I will not have it in my program. I bring it up, and the kids are so relieved, and the parents are so relieved.’"

A highly publicized lawsuit filed by former player Jen Harris led to Portland’s resignation.

University of Miami coach Katie Meier says she “proudly do a spectrum of diversity” on her team.

"A Rene Portland situation should not happen anymore," Meier said. "At this point, your sexuality is the same thing as your race, and I think society has evolved. If [homophobic tactics are] still going on in women’s basketball recruiting, they’re in trouble because to be that way and segment a society, you’re going to miss some really special young people. It’s discrimination, straight up."

Maybe so, but homophobia didn’t go away.

Last year, when Baylor star Brittney Griner came out as gay, she told ESPN that although Baylor coach Kim Mulkey knew she was gay and accepted her, she felt the need to come out publicly. "It was a recruiting thing," Griner told ESPN. "The coaches thought that if it seemed like they condoned it, people wouldn’t let their kids come play for Baylor." Some parents fear that a lesbian role model will turn their daughters gay. Some girls think that simply being labeled as gay. They grow ponytails, wear makeup and nail polish. In softball, they try to keep their not-so-secret creed: ‘No bow, no Lesbo.’"

One lesbian high school girls coach in Florida who has not come out explained: "I don’t want to present a feminine picture to the audience, parents and administrators. I was conditioned to believe that the real me was not socially acceptable. My parents and some of their parents might suspect her homosexuality, but she is keeping her sexuality private and would probably stay that way.

"There are parents who will be judgmental," she said. "It’s really hard because I have girls coming out to me, seeking guidance, and I am fighting the same battles they are but I can’t tell them that. Maybe someday I’ll come out, but for now, I’m not ready to wave the rainbow flag."

As head girls’ basketball coach at Miami High, Sam Baumgarten has had to deal with dozens of talented players during his 23 years in the business. His most coveted and high-profile star, 6-foot 4-center Beatrice Mompremier, on Wednesday chose Baylor over Tennessee, Miami, North Carolina and Ohio State. Notre Dame, Florida, Florida State, Louisville and LSU also wooed her.

Baumgarten has witnessed homophobic tactics in recruiting but said that as far as he knows, it never came up with Mompremier.

"She never mentioned anything about any coach’s sexual orientation," he said. "She felt most comfortable with Coach Mulkey’s personality and coaching style, but she really liked a lot of the coaches who recruited her. It came down to basketball. She’s a girlie-girl, and she’ll be who she is whether her coach is gay or straight. That made no difference to her."

"Veteran Northwestern FWA coach Chuck Glover has had parents prohibit daughters from playing basketball.

"Some of these families are devout Christians and it is a religious issue, and they will pull their kids off the court because they think there are fewer gay girls in those sports."

"We’ve had a few girls who are lesbian on our team the past few years, and we don’t put them on an island. They are all Lady Bulls. They have the same rules. They have the same training. And I think they can’t bring their dates to practice.”

"Drinking. No Drugs. No Lesbians. She was heavily recruited out of Regina High, a Catholic school in Harper Woods, Mich."

"I have to admit, I chose Iowa in large part because Vivian Stringer was married and had a family," Schneider said. "I came from a sheltered Catholic home, third of seven children. I had no experience with gay people, so I went with what I was most comfortable with as a 17-year-old."

"Senior year, after coming out and seeing who was in the locker room, who was in the audience, parents and administrators."

"There are parents who will be judgmental," she said. "It’s really hard because I have girls coming out to me, seeking guidance, and I am fighting the same battles they are but I can’t tell them that. Maybe someday I’ll come out, but for now, I’m not ready to wave the rainbow flag."

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College: Only the strong will see graduation

Social Darwinism

A theory that explains how people evolved through history and how they adapted to different social changes. The theory says those who are more adaptable, stronger and have other capacities will enhance the survival rate for future generations, thanks to adaptation. Meanwhile, the rest disappear over time.

College students and dropping out go hand-in-hand sometimes. Nowadays, the amount of students returning to college to finish their degree is declining, and this is a growing issue.

In college, students face a similar challenge. Classes increase in expectations semester after semester, year after year. The courses taken in our junior and senior year are sometimes so hard that we fail the class. We might have to drop a course before we fail it and we need to retake it later on.

Professors seem to make our lives impossible, but they aren’t really doing this. They simply want us to learn through reading, writing, and some practice, how to manage different situations that might come up in the future when we have careers.

There are other problems that make students drop out of college, and College Darwinism supports these reasons.

Social Darwinism compares evolution through the process of natural selection between animals, plants, and the human race. Therefore, College Darwinism would compare full-time college students in the U.S. to the theory Charles Darwin had about natural selection and adaptation.

The students that drop out of college are the ones that give up and lose the battle of natural selection. There are different reasons for students to drop out of college, one including sh*t happens. There is nothing that can be done about those situations or at least that’s what those students think.

Preventing students from dropping out of school is the best remedy for them to stay in school. Lowering the price of education would make it easier for students because many drop out for financial reasons. More and more students leave their studies because of this.

Students can’t afford an education anymore, and the jobs they apply for after graduation won’t pay much more than a job that doesn’t require a college degree.

Because students aren’t able to pay for their studies with a summer job, savings, or part-time job, they have to work a full-time job and this hinders them. They start failing classes and choose priorities that require them to work and earn money, rather than pay tuition.

When a young adult goes to college for the first time, it’s a big decision. They miss their parents, friends and home and have trouble adjusting to a new environment.

Being homesick is overcome by making new friends at school, taking up activities of your interest which allow you to meet people with common likes and of the similar age who will make you forget little by little about being homesick.

Students aren’t aware of College Darwinism, but it’s necessary to first know the problem to find a solution.

Don’t drop out of school unless it is your very last option. Even then, reconsider and look for help in advisors, professors and friends. Staying in college will give you the foundation that you need to be a more well-rounded member of society.

Erin Crisafulli, a student at Florida State University and member of Students for Concealed Carry, is a “strong supporter of the Second Amendment.”

A QUILT TO REMEMBER

Students stand in front of a section of the ADS memorial quilt on display in Panther Square during World’s AIDS Day on Monday, Dec. 1. The entire quilt has 48,000 panels and serves as a memorial for those who have died of AIDS.

Project aims to protect against sea level rising

FSU shooting revives debate over guns on campuses

The Beacon - 8 Wednesday, December 3, 2014

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A QUILT TO REMEMBER

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Sea level rise and its critical effects on Miami-Dade County has become a major concern. To address this issue, FIU architecture alumni created an informative project on the issue for county residents.

The product and insights of the project are part of the exhibition, “Miami 2100: Envisioning a resilient second century” which is currently shown in the Coral Gables Museum. “[What is] most concerning [is] the extent to which our urban areas will be affected, and the critical need for action,” said Martha Canaves, a landscape architecture and urban design professor, as well as co-curator of the exhibition.

The project started in the departments of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and Environmental and Urban Design in the fall of 2011. Preparations and fabrication of exhibits for the museum began in summer 2014 with the support of the Cintas Foundation and the Cejas Family Foundation.

“I am very happy that I got the chance to be a part of it and learn about a topic that affects our city so directly,” said alumni Ana Echeverri, a member of the project.

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TNS STAFF

Last Thursday’s shooting at Florida State University has sparked a renewed call for allowing guns on college campuses.

Among those leading the charge: Nathan Scott, one of three people shot and wounded last week when Myron May opened fire at the FSU library. Scott is part of a group called Students for Concealed Carry at Florida State, which on Tuesday asked state lawmakers to allow concealed-weapon permit holders to carry firearms on college grounds.

Their request may ruffle feathers in Tallahassee, especially with the powerful National Rifle Association echoing the call.

The NRA’s Tallahassee lobbyist Marion Hammer said Tuesday that she hopes to have a “thoughtful, deliberative” conversation on the subject when the Legislature reconvenes.

It was too soon to say how legislative leaders would respond. House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, a Republican, said the community still needed time to grapple over what happened at FSU, as well as Saturday’s fatal shooting of Leon County Deputy Chris Smith.

But Crisafulli said the time would come to discuss legislation. When it does, we’ll consider all factors that can contribute to stopping tragedies like this from happening in the future,” he said, adding that he is a “strong supporter of the Second Amendment.”

Florida is one of 20 states that ban carrying a concealed weapon on college campuses, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Lawmakers discussed changing that in 2011 as part of a broader proposal to let concealed-weapon permit holders carry their firearms more openly. But the weapons restrictions for college campuses remained in place, thanks largely to efforts by then-GOP state Sen. John Thrasher.

Thrasher recently became president at Florida State. He did not return calls from the Herald/Times on Tuesday.