Expert panel speaks on Haiti

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Approaches to Haiti relief and reconstruction were discussed by a number of experts during FIU’s second ever teach-in on March 6.

Teach-ins were popularized in the 1960s to provoke action on behalf of civil rights, as well as to protest the U.S. government’s involvement in Vietnam.

The first panel at the teach-in covered all sides of the spectrum, putting forth the numerous issues Haitians are facing today and setting realistic goals to solve them.

“I left Haiti two days before the earthquake. I left Haiti on a very optimistic and positive note. Everyone thought 2010 was going to be a good year,” said Robert Maguire, associate professor of international affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences at Trinity University in Washington D.C., who was the first panel member to speak.

“Perhaps, in the aftermath of this tragedy it would give us an opportunity to help Haiti to address some dilemmas that in my view have cast the country into perpetual poverty and inequality, undoing instability, dependence and underdevelop-

HOME OF THE ‘SKETERS’

Sophomores Myrlyn Verdelus (right) and Alana van Dervort (left) capture and measure mosquito fish in the lakes around campus for ecology lab; the results could reveal how well the ecology of the lakes are balancing.

Recycling encourages ‘friendly competition’

RecycleMania has hit FIU. In 2009, FIU participated as a bench- mark school by sending in their recycle reports but they were not in the competition. As FIU’s first year competing they are making a name across Florida. At last count, FIU was No. 3 in the state, out of other Florida schools, with a cumulative recycling rate of 26.15 percent.

“RecycleMania is a friendly competition and benchmarking tool for college and university recycling programs to promote waste reduction activities to their campus communi-
ties,” according to the RecycleMania Web site.

Although there are no individual state awards, FIU ranks at 115 out of 243 nationally in cumulative recy-
cling rate.

Participation in RecycleM-
ania is just one of the activities the University is involved in to meet the commitment of the American College and University President Climate Commitment signed by past Univer-
sity President Modesto Maidique.

“The ACUPCC provides a frame-
work and support for America’s colleges and universities to imple-
ment comprehensive plans in pursuit of climate neutrality,” according to the ACUPCC mission statement on their Web site.

Alexandra Dutton, sustainability program assistant for Parking and Transportation, has been spreading the word about the organization through posters and Students for Environmental Action have been very helpful.

Dutton sends in the amount of pounds in recycling collected to RecycleMania every week. She

works with Jost A. Nuninga, assis-
tant director of University Custodial Services, who sends her the amount of recycled material collected as well as the amount of trash in comparison.

However, many University students were not aware of the competition going on and some do not think it is enough.

“Recycling is a noble effort, but it can’t stop there. There is a culture of gross waste and indulgence that must first be addressed, as it is the root cause,” said Daniel Teeter, senior majoring in religious studies.

Dutton hopes to use the results of the competition as an educational tool.

“Competing will definitely spring people into action,” Dutton said.

Some students share Dutton’s enthusiasm.

“I’m really interested in the Going Green projects and it is a good way to get students involved. I would like to see how far FIU takes this,” said Amanda Ghetia, senior majoring in public relations and communications.

Although the competition is near its end, new buildings such as the College of Nursing, are being built with certain standards in an effort to make FIU a greener campus. FIU abides by Leadership in Environ-
ment and Energy Design, a set of standards that have to meet energy conservation.

Dutton is also planning for next year’s RecycleMania competition. Her anticipated plans include a kick-
off and more detailed information on FIU’s standing in the competition.

“Next year I want to hype the competition and get the faculty more involved,” Dutton said.

The RecycleMania competition ends March 27.
CORRECTIONS

In the March 8th issue of The Beacon, the paper’s editorial board opined in its weekly editorial that the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan required six more credits of students, on top of the usual 120, resulting in an additional $852.24 for students over the course of their undergraduate education, and was therefore an additional burden. The QEP is currently in the planning stages and seeks to adapt current classes in the curriculum to fit the global learning requirements, not add additional ones.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 orIBC at 305-949-4722.
Ex-convict acts as mentor to troubled Florida youth

SYLVESTER BLACK was a hustler who bounced in and out of jail, with Jacksonville police catching drift of his game and booking him into the Duval County jail — 27 times since he turned 18.

"It was like a game of basketball," he says. "Out of bounds, in bounds, out of bounds, in bounds."

But life has tipped in his direction these days. People call him Mr. Black. He totes a briefcase and wears an employee I.D. tag from the Public Defender's Office.

Weekend visits are part of Black's part-time job — with 12-hour days — that also includes standing up for teen clients in court and fielding their phone calls at any hour of the day or night.

On a recent Saturday morning, Black arrived at the West 25th Street apartment of Brian Hughes' family. The 52-year-old was ready with a pep talk he prayed would help change the 16-year-old's path.

He knocked at their door as a man grasping cocaine charges. A judge put him on home detention after spending 27 years, nine months and 8 days of his life behind bars.

But it is this life he wants to spare Brian Hughes and young men like him. "I see me in a lot of these kids," Black says.

In November, police busted Hughes on cocaine charges. A judge put him on home detention as the case worked its way through the justice system. Maria Hughes Harris, his 41-year-old mother tried to understand why a son would mimic a father's mistakes.

"I guess because it wasn't like we had what we have now to have, I guess he saw the struggles of his mother," she says.

"What it is, we're all going to make mistakes in life," Black tells Brian. "But we stand up and knock that dust off. It's not about this neighborhood. It's about the individuals in this neighborhood. If we do good, then the good will come," Black says. "You feel me?"

The mentor soon leaves the apartment feeling a step closer to a mission he often explains like this: "I'm gonna save me a kid. I'm gonna save me a kid if not more."

By 21, Black landed his first prison stint on a burglary charge. In the next two decades he'd do multiple stints, usually for the same offense or probation violations. He got out in 2003, but a weapon arrest sent him back to jail in 2007.

For about a year, he says he slept on a bed again.

"I was like the spirit was telling me 'You weren't born to live like you're living. It's your choice.'" Black was finishing a 16-week juvenile class at Clara White Mission when C.C. Newby asked if any of her students would give testimony at the charity's fundraiser.

When Black spoke to the fundraiser's pearls-and-cufflinks crowd, many teared up when he told of his pride about finally finishing something in his life besides a prison sentence.

"He said, 'Even if I couldn't help one person.'" Clara White CEO Jo/Coby Pittman said. "His story, all the things he's been through. He said the right thing at the right time."

It wasn't long before Black had his own employee I.D. Courthouse 2 at the Duval County Courthouse is packed on a Wednesday morning. Judge James Daniel is on the bench, overseeing arraignments and hearings for juveniles.

The judge calls Brian Hughes’ case next. The lawyers talk before the judge seals a guilty plea deal with a probation sentence.

"Where others don't learn from their mistakes, he has,” Brian's mother tells the judge. "I thank Mr. Black for being a mentor ... It took that help to get him to the point where he is now."

Then there is a warning, with the judge telling Brian he doesn't want to see him again.
GSA is deserving of an adequate governing council

CHARLES HECK
Special to The Beacon

Will getting rid of the Grad- uate Student Association benefit graduate students and FIU?

This is the question I find myself asking after I learned on Monday that the number of graduate representatives in the Student Government Association were linked to the dissolution of the Graduate Student Association.

The most disturbing aspect of this proposal was that they were largely initiated without the knowledge or consent of the graduate students whose futures they so directly impact.

As is often the case when constituents are not properly advised of broad sweeping changes before their representation, this development alarmed many graduate student leaders, including GSA President Svetlana Tyutina. After numerous e-mails from concerned graduate students, SGA President Anthony Rionda outlined proposals in the March 1 meeting that included an increase in funding to GSA and more seats ontega. How a defunct GSA will retain funding remains a mystery.

Rionda also announced a town hall meeting after complaints about the absence of a public relations campaign on town hall meetings for informing the public. Scheduling a town hall on the Friday before spring break will ensure maximum attendance, I am sure.

This kind of top down governing style is not very democratic. Without GSA I have a hard time imagining the future proposals will be delivered to graduate students, other than after the fact notifications of SGA governing council decrees.

The existence of a governing council is important to FIU as a research institute. FIU is evaluated according to its placement of graduate students in the positions of employment. GSA provides graduate students an opportunity to network with other FIU students as well as for professional conferences where graduate students will eventually present their original research.

GSA is a great place to network with future employers and enable graduate students to stay current in their respective fields.

Such presentations are an integral part of gaining employment in the interview process for academics. Since graduate students are often under significant financial constraints, the conference funding that GSA provides is pivotal for promoting FIU as a research institution.

Without some sort of permanence and visibility, the finances and governance of SGA, and more organized. GSA used a written card system to keep track of event attendance last year that was broadly unpopular.

It would be fairly simple to create an Excel spreadsheet of graduate students attending events through Orgsync and then check them off after showing an ID (this would also provide a list-serve for communicators).

All of the documentation that we provide should be done online and on Orgsync. In addition, a completion evaluation should be issued by GSA.

As the town hall meeting is this March 12, I hope that it isn’t an empty gesture of democratic inclusion.

Charles Heck, former President of DISA, the Interna- tional Student Government Association.
The latest R-rated comedy to come out of Hollywood, She’s Out of My League, starring Jay Baruchel (Tropic Thunder) and Alice Eve (Starte...
Brothers from Phi Mu Alpha performed singing grams during Relay for Life as their team’s fundraiser.

1. Brothers from Lambda Theta Phi perform on stage during the Strolling Showcase.
2. Students gather to light votive candles in memoriam of cancer victims past. The candles were placed in bags with the victims’ names and used to light up the walkway around the Ryder Business Building for participants throughout the night.
3. Ed Proenza dives into the crowd after winning Mr. Relay.
4. (Left) Ana Maria Arocha and (Right) Brittany Lola Lipton get “hitched,” Delta Lambda Phi’s fundraiser.
The FIU (8-5) tennis team defeated Louisiana 4-3 on March 7, a day after dropping Middle Tennessee 5-2 on March 6. The Golden Panthers have now won three straight contests to start their season long eight-game home stand after previously losing four of six games.

The streak will get tested today against No. 16 Miami (FL) at 2 p.m. FIU will look to keep their season long streak alive against Miami (6-3) while getting some revenge as well. The Hurricanes beat the Golden Panthers twice last season, once in which they handed them a loss during the regular season and another to end FIU’s 2009 campaign at the NCAA Coral Gables Regional on May 9.

This season, Miami comes to FIU with a three-game winning streak of their own, looking to halt FIU’s current stretch of success.

Miami is led by the No. 3 doubles team in the country in the duo of Anna Bartenstein and Claudia Wasilewski. Junior All-American Bianca Eichhorn, ranked 40th nationally, will lead the singles grouping for Miami and likely match up against Brito (No. 87).

No. 49 FIU began last weekend by handling MTSU in doubles competition to earn the point behind Liset Brito and Priscilla Castillo, as Brito, Castillo, Maria Spenceley and Christine Seredni won singles points to seal the win.

Against UL, the Golden Panthers lost the doubles point when Liset Brito and Priscilla Castillo fell 8-2 to UL’s Julie Mazinova and Mia Gordon, but captured four of the six singles points to edge the Rajin Cajuns (2-6).

Brito, Castillo, Maria Spenceley and Maria Vallasciani won their respective singles matches.

**Wittels leads team in hits**

Garrett Wittels continues to prove himself as the Golden Panthers’ most consistent hitter, hitting safely in all 10 games FIU has played so far this season. As of March 8, Wittels has a team-high .512 batting average with 22 hits, another team best. Coupled with his stellar play at defense, the former Michael Krop High standout has quickly emerged as a staple to the Golden Panthers’ success so far this season.
Golden Panthers lose to No. 2 ASU; Wittels stays hot

The Golden Panthers (8-2) ended their first road trip of the season on a sour note, losing to No. 2 Arizona State (11-0) in a game that was cut short after seven innings of play due to rainy weather conditions on March 8. The Sun Devils were the first ranked opponent FIU has faced so far this season, and remained undefeated after the conclusion of the Coca-Cola Classic held in Surprise, Ariz.

The Golden Panthers came out of the tournament with two wins and two losses.

After a rain delay postponed the opening pitch, FIU opened up the scoring in the top of the first when Mike Martinez singled to left to bring in Pablo Bermudez to give the Panthers an early lead. Martinez finished 2-for-3 in the loss with an RBI and two singles, leading the Golden Panther offense which mustered a total of seven hits for the game.

FIU starter Aaron Arboleya got through the first two innings unscathed, but the Sun Devils evened up the score in the third inning with an RBI single to even up the score 1-1.

Arizona State picked up two more runs off of Arboleya in the fifth and added another off of reliever Eric Berkowitz to finish the scoring. Arboleya was the pitcher of record, earning the loss and dropping to 1-1 for the season. In five innings of work, the sophomore right-hander allowed three runs, one of which was unearned, and allowed seven hits in the loss.

The season as a whole, however, proved to be impressive compared to last year’s campaign. Opponents’ numbers decreased in every statistical category against FIU except for three-point field goal percentage and free-throw percentage while Carey led a very intimidating frontcourt for FIU with 48 blocks in 27 games.

A downside to the season has to be the loss of four seniors in Bosilj, Traugott, Marquita Adley and Cherise Budde. Traugott and Buddy contributed as reserves for the Golden Panthers this season and will need to rely on young talent again next season with key seniors graduating this year.

Freshman guard Carmen Milagragole [left] and junior guard Michelle Gonzalez [right] were instrumental in the Golden Panthers’ improvement this season and will need to rely on young talent again next season with key seniors graduating this year.

**ON THE INCLINE**

The FIU women’s basketball team could have ended their season with at least a first round win in the Sun Belt Conference tournament.

The No. 7 seeded Golden Panthers (14-16, 9-9), however, seemed to lack the right mindset heading into the tournament. Some FIU players commented before the trip to Hot Springs that their team might come in “sluggish” and that NT is “tired-up.” There was even talk that some players on the team were perhaps playing “individually” toward the end of the season.

FIU went to the tournament with those unsolved issues and came out upset by the No. 10 Mean Green, who they had just beaten on Feb. 6 by 18 points — their second largest point margin of the season.

It wasn’t that North Texas was a better team. Rather, the Mean Green came out ready to play and rode on momentum throughout the game to upset the Golden Panthers, who indeed came out sluggish with a 27.8 percent (15-of-54) shooting effort.

It also didn’t help that the Golden Panthers would have to play Middle Tennessee, whom they lost to twice this season by a combined 75 points, if they were to advance to the second round.

However, some confidence clearly could have helped as anything can happen when tournament time comes.

For example, No. 12 seeded New Orleans has stunned the SBC tournament by upsetting No. 5 Florida Atlantic and No. 4 Denver before bowing out to No. 1 Arkansas-Little Rock. FIU could have been the team that came to play and stun the crowd.

Instead, people wondered why the team that looked so complete toward the end of the season had lost by double digits to a conference foe.

The season as a whole, however, proved to be impressive compared to last year’s improvement, including an eight-win improvement. Offensively, FIU improved their scoring output along with increased field goal, free throw and three-point percentages. The team averaged just 53.5 points per game last season compared to 60.8 for this year’s campaign.

With lowering scoring outputs from seniors Monika Bosilj and Ashley Traugott, other players were there to step it up.

In the backcourt, point-guard Michelle Gonzalez improved from 9.3 points per game last season to 11.7 this year while Elisa Carey dominated the frontcourt with a team leading 13.6 PPF.

Defensively, the Golden Panthers also proved to be stronger. Opponents’ numbers decreased in every statistical category against FIU except for three-point field goal percentage and free-throw percentage while Carey led a very intimidating frontcourt for FIU with 48 blocks in 27 games.

A downside to the season has to be the loss of four seniors in Bosilj, Traugott, Marquita Adley and Cherise Budde.

Traugott and Buddy contributed as reserves for the Golden Panthers in a limited capacity, but Bosilj goes out as the school’s all-time leader in three-point field goals and Adley leaves as No. 7 on the list for career blocked shots.

With Cindy Russo likely to return for her 14th season next fall, the Golden Panthers showed enough promise this season to believe they can be a conference contender, but only if the teams continue to make strides in 2010-11.