Chili’s Too opening reigns in the masses

NICOLAS SARAVIA
Staff Writer

As a crowd of students lined up to order everything from quesadillas and fajitas to hamburgers, others enjoyed drinks by the bar while watching FIFA World Cup highlights during the grand opening of Chili’s Too at the Graham Center on June 23.

Sitting booths were not completely filled, yet the waiting time averaged twenty minutes; approximately 600 people congregated at the restaurant for the first two days.

The new Chili’s Too is scheduled to be open every Monday through Thursday from 11am to 8pm, during the Summer semester. The total seating capacity of the restaurant is 316, with approximately 204 inside and 112 seats outside, 24 of which will be added during the next month. Associated with Panther Dining Services, the Chili’s at FIU also offers the option of accepting Panther Bucks as a source of payment.

“The service was great in most aspects, except that the food took too long,” said Khudajia Awan, a Speech Pathology major.

“This is a very interesting job,” said Vanessa Petta, Chili’s Too greeter. “We have had a very successful opening day and the clients are really happy,” she added.

While having a fairly successful opening, the arrival of Chili’s Too to the Graham Center was not free from controversy. Mixed opinions have surfaced due to the serving of alcoholic beverages on campus grounds, which include piña coladas, margaritas, beer, and wine.

“This is college and some people go crazy with alcohol,” said Alberto Gomez, a sophomore Biology major. “Hopefully people will be able to hold their liquor,” he mentioned.

To ensure responsibility, Aramark has added the Intelli-Check ID Verification system and instituted procedures based on campus compliance offi cer and interim privacy compliance program is to have in place and use a source of payment.

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Fraud hotline opened to report ethics violations

MELISSA CACERES
Staff Writer

In the effort to prevent further abuses to University policy, FIU has introduced the Ethics and Compliance Hotline.

Through the company EthicsPoint, which provides a confidential internet and telephone based service, members of the University community are allowed to report any activities that might involve “improper conduct or violations to FIU policy.”

This may include instances such as abuse, fraud or mismanagement of funds.

“This policy sets forth what we expect of our employees because they have an obligation,” said Dr. Kenneth Jessell, senior vice president for finance and administration, and chief financial officer at FIU. “If you think that someone is stealing or is not using the University’s resources in the best possible way — maybe there is a cheaper version and we’re going out and buying the Rolls-Royce version when we don’t need it — to me that is an issue.”

EthicsPoint, founded in 1999, is a nationally recognized fraud prevention company that provides telephone hotline, web-based reporting and case management services for over 2,200 organizations.

With the service being available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, students, faculty and staff can file a report through two methods: online, by using the EthicsPoint website, or by calling toll-free at 1-888-286-5154.

Complaints can be filed under specific categories: accounting/financial, athletics, human resources, information technology, medical, research, risk and safety matters, and academic affairs.

Overall, the program is said to be costing the University around $7,000 to $7,500, respectively.

“It’s really not a lot when you look at what the potential savings would be to the University,” Jessell said. “We’re hoping that this will become just part of our regular compliance of checks and balances program.”

The hotline is not merely one person disclosing information to another, but a two-way dialogue that, while protecting the anonymity of the person, enables the University to follow up on the caller for further conversation about the abuse, according to Jessell.

The calls placed through the hotline are not recorded or traced, leaving the person able to interact with the EthicsPoint representative who then provides a summary of the information in the form of a written report. Through the Internet portal, each visitor is never identified by a screen name and the system automatically deletes Internet addresses.

While FIU consulted with other companies about the service, Jessell stated that “what set EthicsPoint apart was having that interactive, anonymous code that can be used for additional feedback when necessary.”

“One of the elements of an effective compliance program is to have in place and to publicize a system whereby individuals can report or seek guidance regarding potential or actual misconduct without any fear of retaliation,” said Leyda Benitez, university compliance officer and interim privacy
**EthicsPoint to manage hotline**

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officer who is one of the three administrators in charge of investigating fraud claims.

“EthicsPoint is the means to that end, as the individual who makes a report is provided with a unique key number and password that allows the individual to check into the status of his or her report and communicate with University officials while being able to remain anonymous,” Benitez added.

Using a supplemental video featuring University President Mark Rosenberg, the program was presented by Jessell to the Board of Trustees through the Finance and Audit committee on May 20. It was mentioned that the past abuses of the University procurement card by faculty could have been prevented and that FIU “had a lot of weaknesses in the system that came to light.”

“I believe that FIU faculty and staff are principle and ethical professionals dedicated to doing the right thing,” said Rosenberg in the video.

“Unfortunately, we’ve had some incidents of staff members using the University-issued procurement card inappropriately. Those incidents don’t detract from our commitment to our highest ethical standards, but they do redouble our efforts to make sure we get it right.”

**NEWS FLASH**

FIU

Voting for energy fee referendum will be open to students

Students will have an opportunity to vote on the constitutional and green energy fee referendum on Wednesday, June 30. The Student Green Energy Fund is a Florida student-lead initiative aiming to give students the right to vote on a minimal fee to generate large sums of money for campuses to spend on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The approval of the fund would give campuses the ability to reduce their greenhouse gas footprint. While it did not appear on Student Government’s general elections ballot last semester, students will be able to vote from 9 AM to 5 PM on Wednesday at http://www2.fiu.edu/~sga/index2.html.

--- Compiled by Alexandra Camejo

**State of the art GIS technology aids FIU students in research projects**

**RUSSELL QUINOA**

Contributing Writer

Some of the most modern technology in mapping and geography is no farther away than your local Green Library.

The FIU Library Geographic Information System (GIS) teaches many academic units in different fields and is located inside FIU’s Green Library, where it is currently available to all students.

GIS supports research and teaching with 25 high-end workstations, with specialized software for GIS and statistical analysis and staff to help with digital projects. FIU is one of the few academic institutions in the nation with a capability for geospatial statistical analysis.

FIU’s GIS can help students in many different fields including Earth Sciences, Public Health, International Relations, Civil Engineering, Sociology and Anthropology.

Estefan Hernandez, 19, Undecided said “I’m looking forward for a chance to use GIS in my next research project. I’m glad I can go to school that can give opportunities to use technology like this.”

Modern GIS technologies use digital information, for which various digitized data creation methods are used. The most common method of data creation is digitization, where a hard copy map or survey plan is transferred into a digital medium through the use of a computer-aided design.

The major focus of the research center is in Web Portal GIS technology, geographic data dissemination and visualization and Geo-spatial metadata management and creation.

GIS also hold annual events, including the recent GIS Day on February 23 where interested parties within and from outside of FIU community got together to educate the public, exchange ideas, showcase research activities and foster opportunities for potential collaboration.

**Chili’s Too maintains part of FIU history**

CHILI’S page 1

on the University’s Alcohol Policy. While Chili’s Too is brand new, it retains a part of FIU history, keeping the name of the Graham Center patio as “Gracie’s Patio.”

“Gracie is a part of the FIU history. The former Rathskeller/Gracie’s Grill facility proudly showcased the name of Gracie and at the Chili’s Too facility it will continue to be geographically referenced,” said Nancy Cadavid, Marketing Manager of Business Services.

“This history is also near and dear to the hearts of our students, as SGA drafted a resolution a few years ago in support of maintaining the name of Gracie” added Cadavid. The story of Gracie is usually part of the orientation script that is shared with incoming students.

The restaurant’s management has also confirmed that they will be showing the rest of the games of the 2010 FIFA World Cup currently taking place in South Africa.
FIU has an opportunity to become regional soccer hub

It may be the hype surrounding the U.S match with England to open the World Cup for the American squad. Or it could be uproar from the fans after the “foul” call that disallowed the game-winning goal against Slovenia. Maybe it’s Landon Donovan’s thrilling goal in added time against Algeria that propelled the U.S. into the knockout round.

Regardless, one thing is abundantly clear: soccer has arrived in the United States. After years of frustration and disappointment with small slivers of success riddled in between, a nation was finally watching, and the Yanks delivered the theatrics necessary to captivate a massive audience.

CULTURALLY TAILORED

With a majority of its student population boasting a Hispanic heritage alongside a blend of other nationalities that share a rich history and background rooted in the beautiful game, the Golden Panther fan base could be the spark that South Florida needs to kick-start a new era for soccer in the region.

Ferguson arrives on campus and makes first impression

JOEY CRUZ
Staff Writer

After the FIU men’s basketball team scrambled to a 7-24 season in 2009-10, the team can finally begin to work with Isaiah Thomas’ first full recruiting class as next season approaches.

The buzz has been building since last season’s commitment from Rivals.com’s four-star prospect Dominique Ferguson. Now it can come full circle.

“We finished the season with a bad taste in our mouth,” FIU point guard Phil Gary Jr. said.

FEUGERSON ARRIVES

Thomas has added Ferguson, however, who chose over top teams such as Kentucky, UCLA, and even Duke.

Gary has been impressed with Ferguson thus far, even though they have only played in unorganized activities.

“He is just nice,” Gary said. “He is going to pose a mismatch night in and night out.”

Gary focuses his coaching emphasis on the defensive side of the ball. Bringing in this freshman may help he cause.

“Our defense will help find our offense,”

Gary said. “And with Dominique’s length and size, he’ll pose a defensive presence in the paint and up top.”

Gary also states Ferguson could play both forward positions, leaving FIU fans to wonder who will play center for the Golden Panthers.

Ferguson, who is 6-foot-8 and weighs 200 pounds, should immediately help the six-deficient team.

Thomas has also added two other notable players: Phil Taylor, who was ranked 38th out of 100 in the ESPN Top 100 2009-10 recruiting class and Tyrone Wright, a 6-foot-8 transfer from Gillette College.

ON THE MEND

Midway through last season, Gary injured his knees for the first time in his basketball career, dealing with knee tendinitis for stretches.

“I never had to ice my knees,” Gary said. “And towards the end of last season I had to worry about running too fast and cutting.”

Gary states he is getting a lot of rehab and even says he is close to 100 percent healed.

PLENTY OF OPTIONS

There are a number of options at Garcia’s hands that can make Miami’s soccer dreams a reality. He can actively look for potential MLS investors to bring a team to South Florida and to make the accommodations necessary to make FIU Stadium a prime venue.

He can lure Miami’s current pro team, Miami FC of the revived National Soccer League, back to FIU and after their move to Fort Lauderdale.

The buzz has been building since last season and actively promoting the team as they re-launch next year as the Strikers.

Furthermore, Garcia can build on last year’s Gold Cup event by inviting international teams to play at FIU stadium, with the goal of bringing the U.S. Men’s National Team, which held practices at the Golden Panther’s football facility last year, in for a friendly match with another international side.

It may be too late for there to be large-scale soccer matches to be played on a consistent basis this year, but 2011 can be a big year for FIU in terms of becoming a major player in developing interest in the game in Miami and for being hailed by the large group of soccer fans for attracting quality matches to the area.

It is the perfect way to fan the flames of the soccer frenzy that has been created by the U.S. men’s national team in the past several weeks. It sure beats watching games thousands of miles away on television all year long.
Wittels nominated for ESPY award after record season

FIU infirmer Garrett Wittels played one of the best seasons in FIU baseball history in 2010, and was showered with awards for his achievements shortly thereafter.

But, none of the individual accolades Wittels has collected thus far can measure up to his latest nomination: An ESPY award for Best Male College Athlete.

Wittels, who is currently honing his skills in the Alaska College Summer Baseball League, found out the news from FIU media relations coordinator Mut Ramer, who made sure he was the first person to tell the All-American.

“When I first heard it I didn’t have much of a reaction, but then I called my mom and she was really excited, and it sunk in after that,” he said. “It’s every athlete’s dream to get there. Just like actors want to win an Oscar (award), athletes want to go to the ESPYs.”

The former Dr. Michael Krip Senior High School star will know if he received the award when the ESPY’s take place on July 14 at 9 p.m. at the Nokia Theater in Los Angeles.

Wittels will look to beat out additional nominees, which includes University of Kentucky basketball standout John Wall, who became the first overall pick in the NBA draft on June 24, Ohio State University basketball star Evan Turner, University of Alabama football corg Mark Ingram and University of Wisconsin hockey star Blake Geoffrion.

Wittels will be in attendance at the event, and is hoping to get advice from the some of the biggest stars in the sports.

“I’m looking forward to getting some advice from guys like Kobe Bryant, Dwyane Wade, and LeBron James and just sharing information about what we do,” Wittels said.

Wittels finished the season with a 56-game hitting streak, which is the second longest of all time, trailing only Robin Ventura, who acquired a hit in 58 straight contests in 1987 at Oklahoma State University. To go along with the unprecedented streak, Wittels also led the team Golden Panthers with 21 doubles and 60 RBI.

FOOTBALL

The Golden Panthers added JUCO infielder Caylin Hauptsman, who signed with FIU after receiving interest from UCLA, Cal and Wash-

from among other FBS programs.

The 6-4, 312-pound infielder, who played at the College of the Canyons in 2009, will come to FIU as a sophomore and will be eligible to take the fall for the Golden Panthers to add an instant boost to the offensive line.

“Caylin has the ability to be an instant difference-maker in the trenches,” Cis-

obal said. “We’re extremely excited about having Caylin join the FIU family.”

MEN’S BASKETBALL

Chris Coleman, one of the top centers in the 2011 recruiting class, verbally committed to the FIU basketball program over the weekend.

Coleman, a 6-foot-10 standout at Christian Life Center Academy in Houston, had received offers from FIU and West Virginia according to Rivals.com and had been receiving interest from UConn, Marquette and UTEP.

Compiled by Jonathan Ramos and Joel Delgado
Resources for students to vacation on a modest budget

JANET CAREAGA
Staff Writer

Taking a much-needed vacation might be high on a student’s wish list but after paying for tuition, books and all other unexpected student expenses, vacations sit low on the financial priority list.

“This is the age when we’re at our most adventurous and most curious,” said Natali Aguero, a junior majoring in English. “We want to see the world but the world doesn’t make it easy.”

The key to finding a good travel deal is research. Time, patience, and search base.

Knowing where to look is important, especially as a student on a financial priority list. Time, patience, and a research base.

A great way to get discounts on anything from plane tickets to restaurant is an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). This card is the only internationally accepted proof of full-time student status and is used by over 4.5 million students in 120 countries.

Not currently a full-time student? The ISIC Association also offers a card with similar benefits for anyone under the age of 26, the International Youth Travel Card (IYTC).

Special prices for students are important since we don’t have time to work enough to save up for a trip because we have to go to class and pay for those classes,” Aguero said.

Group travel companies like EF College Break and Contiki tours also offer tours just for young people varying between the ages 18-35.

Vanessa Gomez, a junior envi-
rment studies major, took an 18-
day trip and visited four different countries with EF College Break for less than $3000. “It includes airfare and lodging,” Gomez said.

With Contiki, every tour includes highlights of each destination in the price.

“What are going to be, we’ll line up
tips to famous monuments, guided walking tours, organized nights out to work enough to save up for a trip because we have to go to class and pay for those classes,” Aguero said.

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With Contiki, every tour includes highlights of each destination in the price.

“Wherever you are, you’re just line up
tips to famous monuments, guided walking tours, organized nights out and more, at no extra cost,” boasts the company’s website.

Knowing where to look is impor-
tant so ask around. Friends can be more of a resource than just for class notes or what’s happening this weekend.

Exper-
tiences and information are a useful source for narrowing down your search base.

If the travel dates are flexible, shopping websites with travel price predictors is a must. This allows travel-

erers to see what airline ticket prices are lowest within a given time frame.

There are also many web sites that act as search engines comparing the lowest price for airlines like Orbitz, Expedia, Priceline, and Kayak.

Finding hotels at low rates can be tough, especially in a popular travel destination.

An alternative to the conventional hotel is a hostel. A hostel is a more budget friendly accommodation where travelers can rent a bed in a shared room. The thought of sharing a room with a bunch of strangers is a scary idea, especially when movies like “Hostel” portray negative images about this kind of lodging.

Guests at hostels are generally young because they are students trav-

cing on a budget so they will be people of similar ages and interests.

Finding the right hostel may be tricky but companies like HI Hostels, a non-profit organization, specialize in helping youth find quality hostels in countries all over the world.

All-inclusive packages are a great way to stay within a certain budget. Sometimes it is more economical than booking a flight and hotel sepa-

rately, and many of these packages tend to include meals so there is not as much outside spending required.

If there are no immediate plans for travel in the future, it doesn’t hurt to sign up for e-mail newsletters. It is possible to unknowingly stumble upon a great deal that wasn’t planned but it is in the realm of possibilities. It is hard to turn down a good travel deal, especially as a student on a budget.

FISTFULS OF TECH

Limited internet access a dumb choice for smart phones

Most of us who have smart phones love the fact that we can surf the Internet and use our apps as much as we want. But recent moves by Verizon Wireless and AT&T are looking to put a stop to that and I’m going to tell you why that sucks.

In the late 90s, AT&T was the first company to introduce the idea of unlimited Internet to the masses. When this happened, Internet service providers either died or dramatically restructured, like AOL, who is now a more content focused company.

The unrestricted, unlimited Internet is what made everything it is now. It paved the way for Google to dominate the cloud and it led to the dissemination of Internet access to mobile smart phones and now tablet computers.

AT&T-Mobility announced last month that it would be doing away with the unlimited data plan on its handsets and will be transitioning to a two-tier price structure with the highest plan capped at two gigabytes. Verizon announced that it would follow suit later this year.

Ironic isn’t it? The same company who gave the world unfettered access to the Internet is now taking it away, announcing it near the release of the new iPhone 4 no less.

“Ironic isn’t it? The same company who gave the world unfettered access to the Internet is now taking it away, announcing it near the release of the new iPhone 4 no less.”

“When this happened, Internet service providers either died or dramatically restructured, like AOL, who is now a more content focused company.

One wonders who would want to develop an app that users won’t use for fear of data overages? Moreover, developers will now have to keep the data caps in the back of their minds as they design and develop their apps, stifling creation.

So what should you do? Well, you have a few options. Your first option is basically to shut up and accept it. Verizon and AT&T are, sadly, the two biggest carriers in the United States. They have the most users and the largest network.

If you enjoy Verizon’s reliability or the fact that AT&T has the phone you like, you might as well stick with them. The fact is, for the average user two gigabytes of data is more than enough, even if it is a looming clock ticking over your head, as Jarvis might say.

Your second option, and your most extreme, would be to abandon ship as soon as you can. Both Sprint and T-Mobile, though lower in the mobile food chain, both offer very competi-
tively priced unlimited data plans.

If you can put up with the lesser quality network, or when compared to AT&T an equally qualified network, these carriers might be able to accommodate you. Both have a great line-up of phones and work well in the Miami area.

The average user may never notice the caps, but rest assured they are there and if you go over them, they will charge you extra. In the end, these caps serve only to hurt the Internet.

AT&T should invest in their infrastructure and make sure that when they promise unlimited, they can deliver it.

Fistfuls of Tech is a weekly technology column.
Summer television promises athletics action, drama

KATHY PAZ
Contributing Writer

What is once “Lost” has now been found. “Glee” is on summer vacation, “Grey’s Anatomy” is in surgery and “The Office” is closed for renovations. You won’t have to worry about spoilers either because “Gossip Girl” is having problems connecting to the Internet.

These are just a speck on the spectrum of television shows that have either wrapped up their series or season. While the majority of our favorite shows are simply on hibernation for the summer, big hits like “Lost,” “Law and Order” and “24” have, in fact, gone off the air for good.

So, what is there to watch after a long day at the beach? Fox has your favorite shows are simply on summer television promises athletics action, drama. For you in the world of television, the flow of events was generally uninterrupted, and the acting was immersive and respectable.

The first run of this year’s ATSF opening number was, indeed, a sterling success.

The show, which includes material shot in South Beach, won’t be premiering until July 26th.

Whatever your preference, this summer’s got something for you in the world of television. So, kick off your shoes and enjoy!
Need for oil drilling unfounded

MICHAEL FOLEY Contributing Writer

The porous borders that have come to symbolize this country are on the path towards fortification. Tell Everyone you know. Tell your aunt Olga who’s visiting from Norway, warn your friend from Sri Lanka, your friend Hiroko from Japan, and your visiting secret admirer, Esperanza, from Mexico. I imagine that a harsh, repugnant taste would linger in your mouth if your expatriate friend experienced what Leslie Cocche did on March 12th, 2010. While in transit to Miami-Dade College, Leslie was questioned and arrested by U.S. Border Control. The 18-year-old Peruvian was believed to be an illegal alien, living under the auspice of her family. She was immediately detained and transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The immigration reforma- tion in the U.S. is happening quite peculiarly. Polls indicate that a majority of undocumented immigrants and un- legal aliens are on the path towards fortification. This permits law enforcement officials to arrest and detain any individual who is an illegal alien, and has committed a felony in the United States. So, you might ask, was Leslie Cocche, on her trip to jail. Yet she was targeted, questioned. Miami is often considered a desirable immigration spot and such a reputation will cast a shadow on our nation’s immigration policy. It is necessary to fix our immigration system. However, the proposed Arizona bill is passing the nation on the wrong path. Although the law doesn’t openly authorize discrimination, it will impose a new immigration law. Its implementation, will be a uniquely and discriminatorily unfair system. For now, it’s best to keep your ID on you.

Arizona law sets dangerous precedent

ROMNEY MANANSA Contributing Writer

Arizona’s association with the spill, by the state’s vital tourism industry, led to a massive backlash against oil drilling. The spill was not only a public relations disaster, but it also had significant economic consequences for the state. The economic effects for the long term, according to economists, are projected to be severe. One University of Georgia academic believes the industries, like the environment, could take decades to recover. Tellingly, the area around Alaska that had been affected by the relatively smaller Exxon Valdez spill of over 20 years ago still has not yet fully recovered. Arizona’s tourism industry, as a result, has suffered significantly. The state’s already troubled budget. If the administration wants to effectively market this smoking-ban market, it needs to begin by making use of this law. The smoking-ban rests, in part, on our nation’s energy policy. Our long-term energy needs won’t be met by increased domestic oil supplies, and the costs outweigh the benefits. With just 5% of the world’s population, we’re responsible for a quarter of the planet’s global consumption of oil. There is clearly a correlation here; consumption has grown so fast, even beyond what’s needed for a developed nation, that we’ve outstripped what could be provided by domestic supply. The American public’s inattentive attitude towards the oil that feeds our cars is an alarm. Miami is often considered a desirable immigration spot and such a reputation will cast a shadow on our nation’s immigration policy. It is necessary to fix our immigration system. However, the proposed Arizona bill is putting the nation on the wrong path. Although the law doesn’t openly authorize discrimination, it will impose a new immigration law. Its implementation, will be a uniquely and discriminatorily unfair system. For now, it’s best to keep your ID on you.
Students discounts planned

JACQUES ROZIER Contributing Writer

Students may soon save a little more money with local businesses if a new initiative is successful.

Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus President Christin ‘CiCi’ Battle is working on a plan that would get students discounts with stores on Biscayne Boulevard.

“We have many [resources] in the area and I don’t feel they cater enough to the FIU students,” Battle said.

In its current state, the program is mainly an information initiative to educate the students. There are many businesses already providing discounts to FIU students such as T.G.I. Fridays on Biscayne Boulevard.

“This program is a way to diversify the students with services and deals in the area,” Battle said.

One of the important factors of the program is that it is not designed to raise any student fees to fund it, nor will it require special allocation from SGC-BBC’s budget.

Battle is currently in talks with the Walgreens on Biscayne Boulevard and NE 151st Street concerning the logistics of the program. Battle first met with a Walgreen’s manager between spring and summer semesters. She became aware of a mutual interest between Walgreens and BBC at that point.

Walgreens initially wanted to set up special discounts for Welcome Week in the fall. However, Battle seeks a more permanent discount program. She is also planning on meeting with them again in the near future.

Though the tentative start date will be for Welcome Week in the fall, the program sometime in Summer B is not out of the question.

Walgreens is in preparation to post flyers on campus to raise awareness about the offers they provide students.

According to Battle, beginning with Walgreen’s is actually a good fit for the BBC community, tying in with concerns of being unable to get food and other amenities on campus after 8 p.m., when all venues on campus are closed.

“They are open kind of late and we do have these students here, said Battle.

The program can incorporate more businesses to offer special incentives to students who support their stores. Battle has attempted to reach Friday’s as well.

The program will be used through the PanamaCARD or a separate discount card exclusive to FIU students. According to Battle, there is no program such as this at the Modesto Maidique Campus, although local businesses around MMC offer similar deals.

This discount program is the beginning of various initiatives designed around students’ wants and needs.

Wolf Center renovations bringing needed improvements

BECCA GRIESEMER Contributing Writer

The sky’s the limit with the Wolf Center University’s latest renovation.

Students and visitors to WUC at the end of Summer B should expect to find new skylight windows, Perle Construction Inc, which began the replacement of Panther Square’s skylight windows on June 21, expects to finish by July 30.

Scaffolding and a lift have made Panther Square unavailable for events. Students, faculty, and staff are asked to find an alternate route through Panther Square, as traffic will be redirected to minimize the number of people around the work site.

Jennifer Cooper, assistant director for operations, said that the windows haven’t been replaced in her 15 years at FIU, and possibly since the building opened in its current form almost two decades ago.

Besides leakage during heavy rain, the current windows weren’t designed to withstand impacts during hurricane-force winds, which had worried John Cal, associate vice president of Facilities Management.

“This will be a great help in the event of a hurricane since protecting them with shutters was difficult and dangerous,” Cal said.

Moreover, deterioration of the caulk, a waterproof filler and sealant used in building repair. Current technology has allowed the University to replace the skylights with impact resistant windows.

“We’re very happy about that,” Cooper admitted.

Gregory Olson, senior director of student affairs, agreed.

“We hope they will remedy the water leaks in Panther Square,” Olson said.

The approximately $78,000 cost of the replacement skylight windows will come from Public Education Capital Outlay Infrastructure, a state program run by the legislature that provides funds for the maintenance, repair and construction of public education facilities.

This renovation is part of a larger effort to revamp the WUC. The offices for the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus and the Wellness Center were moved to the third floor at the site of the former fitness center in early 2010.

In addition, the WUC expects to start construction within the next few months on the old second-floor cafeteria, pending budget approval. The proposed layout for the space includes new offices for the women’s center, several storage classrooms and a multipurpose meeting rooms, and a game room for students, which includes a pool table.