**University graduation rates ‘not strong’**

NATALIA LOPEZ  
Contributing Writer

According to the Associated Press, the state of Florida ranked 10th in the nation with one of the highest graduation rates, but year after year Florida International University’s rates continue to drop. In response, a new plan has been implemented to help increase these rates.

“Our graduation rate is not strong,” said Dr. Kandell Malocsay, FIU’s Director of Retention and Student Success. “This problem has become FIU’s number one priority.”

Of the incoming freshmen that began at FIU in fall 2002, only 18.6 percent had graduated in four years. By 2008, however, the data shows that this number doubled to 46 percent.

Consuelo B. Boronat, Director of Assessment & Evaluation for Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education at FIU, explained what the University has done and is planning to do to facilitate the process of graduating.

Boronat explained that the goal is for the students to move through their degree as quickly as possible.

“What seems critical is for students to go to school full time or as close to full time as possible so that they graduate quickly,” said Boronat.

The bridge adviser program is one of the steps FIU has taken to assist students in graduating at a smoother and faster pace.

Charlie Andrews, Director of the Advising Center reported that FIU began hiring bridge advisers in the year 2009.

Bridge advisers help students make the transition into the junior year and are to be fully accepted into their major. These advisers will be helping students choose majors that are suitable to a student’s interest, personality, and capabilities.

Currently, the goal is to have 32 lower division advisers and 14 bridge advisers, at least one per college. Three selected advisers were assigned to the Business, Arts and Science, and Education programs in 2009 and an additional five bridge advisers were added this past June to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Engineering programs.

Bridge advisers were also hired at the Transfer and Transition Office to help transfer students from Miami Dade College. Next year FIU will be hiring six more bridge advisers.

The current ratio is one adviser for...
Health department pending approval

The opportunities that it will bring to the College of Medicine to work hand-in-hand with professionals... is exceptional

Kenneth Jessell
Chief Finance Officer,

Major fairs to aid students with careers

UNIVERSITY COMPLEX

Multi-purpose Academic Building

The building, estimated
to be 90,000 square feet, comes with an authorized budget of up to $32.5 million. The project is included within the 2010-2011 budget passed by the Florida Legislature. The building will be financed through a bond and repaid through liquidation of Health lease payments.

Last year, we were 50% successful with the enforcement of appropriate language in the house and senate, which then passed. That will allow for the construction of this facility.

An academic health department is known as “an organized partnership between schools of public health, medicine, nursing, and allied health sciences with the University and has been developing the idea of the merger while he was still provost of the University and has been developing the project is awaiting the presentation of the project during the Finance and Audit Committee meeting of the FIU Board of Trustees.

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FIU fans misplacing anger about local media coverage

A few weeks back, a minor reporter for The Miami Herald who had been covering a relatively insignificant beat that he was nonetheless extremely passionate about posted a 2,700 word rant on his blog. This rant dabbled as a clearing of the air for his readers and a “screw you” to his now former employer.

In this blog, he took the time to let his readers know that he fought for them and tried to do his best to give them the coverage he felt they deserved. He showed numerous examples of what he considered an offensive bias inside of one of the halls of one of the most revered journalistic institutions around the area.

Normally, this wouldn’t be relevant to this paper at all. Note, that while we appreciate and sympathize with anyone who takes an opportunity to get back at an oppressive employer, nobody has as of yet mentioned the Jet Blue employee who made a screw you public exit from his job in recent weeks.

The interest here is not with his departure, but rather that the “relatively insignificant beat”—my words—he happened to be covering was FIU Sports.

Pete Pelgrin had been considered by many fans to be the go-to source for all things FIU. Pelgrin until his abrupt exit, and he had a relatively small but rabid following on The Miami Herald’s FIU Sports blog.

Pelgrin’s terse and angry send off vindicated many who believe that, over time, The Miami Herald has worked against FIU due to an ingrained bias towards a “competing” institution nine miles across town, the University of Miami.

A large part of me wants to reject this as ridiculous on its face. It is in The Miami Herald’s best interest for the some 100,000 plus alumni of this University to want to pick up their paper and read about FIU. Why would they actively work to undermine such a potentially valuable audience?

After all, despite whatever high-minded aspirations the heads of journalistic institutions around the nation pay lip service to, at the end of the day, The Miami Herald is a business. Yes, it is a business that should hold itself to a higher standard of ethics and morality, but in an era where every newspaper is fighting to survive, the bottom line is that money trumps all.

And readership equals money, so it is in the newspaper business, I would argue, to do with The Miami Herald. They are a business. While every college journalism student learns in their basic intro to journalism classes about the importance of ethics and fairness in reporting, when newspapers are losing the business and being forced to cut corners to save money, those things fall by the wayside.

Putting the sad decline of the American newspaper aside, we have before us a group of fans who honestly believes a major university would purposefully deny themselves potential consumers because they are too busy being fans of the other team.

The passion of these fans has to be admired, but their disdain is focused in the wrong place. They see miles of empty blue bleachers at the new football stadium.

They see a sea of garnet, gold, blue, orange, and green as they walk through the Graham Center, representing every college in the state but their own.

And they get mad.

And that is a perfectly reasonable response. FIU has a large, apathetic and pathetic fan base that is too busy rooting for other schools to go to stadiums and arenas that they drive past every day when going to class or may even have class in and root for the school they attend.

The idea of it upsets the sports fan in me, too.

However, this isn’t The Miami Herald’s fault. Until FIU starts to matter in a big way, in a way that UM matters, there will never be that same coverage, at least not in the sports page.

FIU might be more important to the structure of the community of Miami as a whole, graduating far more native Miami residents than UM and placing those same people right back into the Miami populace as educated and capable citizens, but the sports pages don’t care about that. All that matters is that people are going to pick up the paper when the school is featured.

Perhaps we should hold our publications up to a higher standard, but when you have ESPN essentially acting as a marketing arm for the NFL, NBA and MLB and their biggest stars, as well as a new Sports arm of the TMZ celebrity gossip brand, we’re too far gone from that higher standard, which may never have existed in the first place. This is where my cynicism comes from, and why I struggle to sympathize with those who can’t see the dollar signs when this issue is brought up.

The small but vocal fans who have voiced these concerns about The Miami Herald represent the most die hard of the fan base, and every fan base needs people like that. In many ways, they represent the potential FIU has for a large fan base some day.

But until your everyday FIU student or alumni begins to care in a significant way and specifically until it affects The Miami Herald’s bottom line, they’ll continue to pay that other school more attention.

FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK

Griffin is frontrunner for kicking duties

Although the quarterback race is still up for grabs, the competition for the team’s starting kicking job is clearing up. But nothing is guaranteed yet, according to head coach Mario Cristobal.

After Freshman’s practice, Cristobal announced that sophomore Jack Griffin is the front-runner for FIU’s field goal duties.

“As of this point in time, Jack Griffin is the leader in terms of field goals,” said Cristobal.

According to Cristobal, the kickers have been attempting around 25 to 30 kicks a day. Griffin completed more field goals than both Peter Mallett and Sam Miller have also done a “great job” in practice.

“Jack Griffin is the leader in terms of field goals,” said Cristobal.

Cheseborough who is doing a “phenomenal job” of training camp wearing an orange injury mask.

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Summer festival stays away from the mainstream

As silly as the plot may originally seem, Kill Shakespeare provides an entertaining adaptation of some very well known Shakespearean characters.

Later on, the reader is introduced to a bumbling Falstaff, a traitorous Iago, and a naïve Juliet.

Though seeing these renditions of these characters is one of the best parts of the book, it is also its greatest weakness.

The reader’s enjoyment of the book depends on how well they know Shakespearean works. This may leave the book to fail in its very small niche market.

As it is, the book seems to be hard to get a hold; requiring special orders from comic shops or online distributors, but I encourage anyone who might be worried they’re lacking an understanding of Shakespearean characters is one of the best parts of the book, but don’t let the series pass you by while the strangest stuff of its time becomes groundbreaking, popular, and works of art such as Spiderman or Watchmen.

There’s no assurance that you’ll love the book, but don’t let the series pass you by while you’re deciding.

Panel Panel is a bi-weekly column discussing everything associated with the world of comic books.
The spectrum of health, fitness, and nutrition, there are winners and losers.

As a young child, I was always active, so the weight issue wasn’t there. But at 10 years old, there was less playing outdoors and more time spent in front of the TV with the same overload of sugary snacks and no way for my body to burn it off.

At the time, I had no idea what true exercise was and I generally dismissed six-pack abs as a vain concept.

By the time I was 15, I weighed a staggering 285 pounds with a body fat percentage over 30. Just to give everyone some knowledge, an elite athlete would have somewhere between 6% and 10% while a normal man would have between 18% and 25%. For the ladies, a healthy percentage would fall between 14 and 31.

In high school, I grew increasingly self-conscious about my body while at the same time my self-esteem took a nosedive. I was constantly told by doctors to drop the weight or I would be diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, or worse. At the time, I paid little attention because I thought major diseases were reserved for old people. I was about to receive a crash course in the school of reality checks.

The very beginning of my transformation took place during my junior year of high school. I convinced a friend to join me in coaching an elementary school soccer team. As a coach, I would show the players how to run the drills correctly and how to become conditioned athletes.

In time, I thought to myself, “If seven-year-olds can beat me athletically, where will I be in another 10 years?”

That was exactly the jump start I needed to improve my health and well-being.

Starting senior year, I joined the badminton and track and field teams in order to get me moving. With an iron mindset and indomitable will, I gradually lost almost 30 pounds in my senior year.

By senior year, I was more motivated than ever, and my friendship with fitness had paid off, and I was satisfied.

After high school, there were no more frustrated sports that I could join so instead of reverting back to my old lifestyle and wasting away all the work I had put in, I decided to join my local L.A. Fitness. It’s at the gym where I discovered my second home and truly embraced fitness.

During my early years I still suffered from sporadic stress and similar issues. I found peace of mind in one of my favorite hobbies: weightlifting.

Along with a mostly clean diet and hours upon hours spent in the walls of that godforsaken sweat factory, I rediscovered the person hidden under all my self-confidence issues and anxiety.

To this day, I am a firm believer that hard work does indeed pay off. To my knowledge, nothing bad comes from a healthy diet coupled with regular exercise, while the benefits remain plentiful.

As of right now, I weigh 180 pounds with a body fat percentage between 11 and 12.

I hope that I have inspired some of you to re-evaluate your life and strive to push yourself each and every day.

Remember that every run, every dumbbell pressed, and every sore muscle is an investment to yourself that will be paid back tenfold.

If you have any concerns at all about anything related to health, exercise, or nutrition, don’t hesitate to reach out to me.

If you have a question, I have an answer.

During this time, I’m on the road constantly and always looking to incorporate new fitness regimes. I have to know how to make things happen and live life to the fullest.

The Sweatshop will run every Wednesday.

Chi is a certified personal trainer with the National Council on Strength and Fitness in the state of Florida.
Google’s new motto: “Don’t be honest”

**JORG VALENS**
Editor in Chief

In the months ahead, network neutrality, or the idea of a free uninhibited Internet, will become a hot button issue. However, with decisions and discussions going on around us, key players are forgetting that they don’t own the Internet, we do.

Telecos are busy watching out for themselves. Internet companies are busy for an open Internet, and so we’re left to think, and the Federal Communications Commission is powerless standing by, like a pitbull with no teeth.

Recently, telecommunications giant Verizon and supposedly neutral telcos will refer to “Googizon,” jumped in bed together and released a policy proposal to lawmakers regarding what should be done about net neutrality.

These two companies make strange bedfellows as it is. Verizon has been the vocal telco in the war on the neutral Internet and Google has been its staunch adversary, fighting for users rights and living by the mantra “don’t be evil.”

It’s amazing how much a couple of million Android phones sold changes things.

In the proposal, Googizon, made it clear that wired Internet services, such as DSL and Cable Internet, are going to be subject to net neutrality; no content or bandwidth discrimination and complete transparency.

ISP’s will be able to “to address traffic that is unwanted by or harmful to users, the provider’s network, or the Internet,” according to the agreement. A similar mention earlier in the document also mentions that ISPs will be prevented from interfering with “lawful” content.

I don’t feel comfortable with the idea that a corporate entity is determining what is “lawful” or “wanted” by the users, who pay for the service. Aside from this minor nit pick, wired Internet access has dodged a large bullet. Sadly, I can’t say the same for wireless.

When it comes to wireless Internet, the one accessed through carriers by most mobile devices, net neutrality will simply not apply, according to Googizon.

“Because of the unique technical and operational characteristics of wireless networks, and the competitive and still-developing nature of wireless broadband services, only the transparency principle would apply to wireless broadband services,” this time.

Carving out wireless from the Internet as a whole is completely contrary to the direction the Internet is going. As many experts put it, this is looking to create two Internets; one that is open, competitive, and advertising driven and one that is closed, non-competitive, and hidden behind pay walls. This shift in thinking that the Internet is behind pay walls. This shift in thinking that the Internet is one that is closed, non-competitive, and hidden behind pay walls. This shift in thinking that the Internet is not even playing field.

In light of their lack of resources, it seems that even not trying to catch criminals may be in their best interest, according to the New American. Chief King has denounced the comments made by the officer, and has apologized for them.

However, maybe Google should embrace its status as the number one educational institution in the state for aspiring car thieves. Perhaps students could learn something from the nearly 30% increase in vehicle-related crimes on campus since 2008.

In fact, students at other schools with low crime rates often graduate dangerously unprepared for attacks from burglars and other hoodlums. FIU can provide something other schools don’t have. However, if Google decides to implement a radical “catch the criminals” strategy to stop on campus crime, there is a cheap method of doing so.

Google could offer an undergraduate course in vigilante justice. The class could be mandatory, made by Freshman Experiences, and provide skills far more valuable in the outside world.

Rather than learn how to join a student club or attend a lecture, students could learn how to subdue an armed miscreant using only a ballpark pen. That’s something that won’t bring them much value like MIT, Harvard, or Carlos Alberz University. FIU would be breaking ground (not to mention a few laws).

For the time being, we will have to rely on our underfunded police department, or just stop owning automobiles.

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**CHRIS CARRAL**

**As someone who participated in a FIG during my first semester, I know that without it, I would have had a very difficult time...**

When a student first enters FIU, they may become a part of a First Year Interest Group, in which they join a set of students in taking a preset selection of classes. Some see this as a major inconvenience, as the element of choice and independence seems to be taken away.

In reality, FIGs are an important part of the college experience, as it helps greatly in the transition from high school to college. According to About-Us.org, sources of stress during a student’s first year of college includes the need to fit in, balancing their workload with their social life, and adjusting to a new schedule and knowing when and where to get help for college-related problems.

The FIG program addresses those needs. Since those in the FIG program are taking classes with a core group of students, it is much easier to create friendships with these people rather than starting from scratch. Furthermore, the Freshman Experience course offers lessons in time management and University services.

Also, by having a set schedule with the same group of students and the same professors, the high school schedule of classes is somewhat mimicked, making it easier for a student to learn time management skills as it sets the framework of familiar faces.

As someone who participated in a FIG during my first fall semester, I know without it, I would have had a very difficult time adjusting to college life.

When I attended orientation, the description of college life given to me by the University was vastly different from the explanation given to me by my high school counselors. They said very little about the registration process. Instead they filled my head with ambiguous tales of picking whatever classes I wanted, strict professors and a heavier workload.

Although the idea of being free to create my own schedule appealed to me, I was more worried with how I would make new friends, as many of the ones I made during high school were going elsewhere. I had the image of being stuck in a room with 200 people, but not knowing a single soul.

For the time being, I had the image of being stuck in a room with 200 people, but not knowing a single soul. As students within the FIG program had the image of being stuck in a room with 200 people, but not knowing a single soul. As students within the FIG program had the ability to continue making new friends due to the close-knit environment and the ability to make new friends within the FIG program.

For the time being, we will have to rely on our underfunded police department, or just stop owning automobiles.

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**JASMYN ELLIOTT**
Asst. Opinion Editor

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The Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus has initiated a project to further enhance the cafeteria at BBC. This new section of the cafeteria will be named the “Panther Den.”

The “Panther Den” renovation start date has not been determined yet, however, the goal for completion is set for August 31, which will be shortly after the start of the fall semester for students.

“The purpose of the ‘Panther Den’ is to create an ambiance for all students on the campus as well as to increase the demand for SGA which will ultimately increase our services provided to the students,” Christin ‘Cici’ Battle, SGC-BBC president said.

This project was initiated due to the number of complaints received by students to SGC who do not feel that the cafeteria is open long enough for students to study for upcoming exams, Battle said.

Once the ‘Panther Den’ has officially opened, SGC has planned a marketing campaign geared towards students to share their feedback on the cafeteria services currently being offered. Once the survey results have been compiled, SGC will relay that information to Student Services to answer the students’ requests on the cafeteria services.

The ‘Panther Den’ is expected to offer students and faculty an area for relaxing and lounging when they’re in between various activities on or off campus. There is also expected to be flat screen televisions and a stereo system to help liven up the mood in the cafeteria.

At the moment, there is currently only one flat screen television which was donated to the MMC Graham Center. Different types of media are expected to be displayed on the TVs including: campus events, current events and different advertisements.

“We are not completely sure of what type of advertisements will be displayed on the TVs at this time,” said Oehleo Higgs, SGC-BBBC press secretary.

It is also expected that students will still be able to utilize the cafeteria for regular services while the renovations are taking place as there will not be any real construction going on.

“Some students feel this isn’t a proper use of funds. I would rather see SGC use the money and put it to use in a study area or recreation area, which will ultimately serve as a better purpose to the students,” said Andrea Franklin, graduate Law Program student.

“At this time, we are still awaiting back quotes from various vendors for all the different types of amenities being offered at the ‘Panther Den.’ So we are still unsure as to where the money for the entire project will come from,” Battle said.

Once the ‘Panther Den’ has opened, SGC has planned a re-branding campaign to help students become acquainted with the new set-up and to help increase students on campus to utilize the cafeteria services more.

“Once the renovations are over, SGA is planning to have a special ribbon cutting day to welcome students into the ‘Panther Den,’” Higgs said.