Survey finds colleges looking at students’ social media presence

ANAIA FIESTAS
Staff Writer

Students may need to monitor their Facebook pages a bit closer.

According to a recent survey, more than 80 percent of college admissions officers consider social media presence when recruiting students.

While the Kaplan survey would suggest that the majority of universities use social media to screen potential students, FIU is among the smaller percentage of schools that does not take students’ Facebook pages under consideration for admission.

“We’re all on Facebook. If you search any of our officers on Facebook, you’ll probably find them. However, FIU does not take social media into consideration when admitting students into the University,” said Undergraduate Admissions Associate Director, Barry Tailor.

According to Tailor, the Florida Board of Government Regulations has certain components required for college admissions, social media is not one of them.

Although the University does not use Facebook to screen for admissions, it does use the social media site for student outreach.

The Undergraduate Office of Admissions currently has a Facebook page available for all students to ask questions about the university, the admissions process and any other general concerns that may arise.

“Though the University’s Graduate Admissions Office does not use Facebook yet, it has noted that other colleges use it as a recruiting tool. However, they do not use Facebook to investigate the students once they have applied to the college,” said Graduate Admissions Associate Director, Allison McComb.

The Kaplan survey notes that Facebook is not a definite component for admission, but it is becoming something that universities are looking into.

Allison Otis, a former Harvard University interviewer, suggests that social media can actually make an admissions officer prejudiced against a student without consciously realizing it.

“Students need a social life. Personally, I do have pictures of myself partying and dancing at clubs. If colleges turn away from my application because of my social life, then I wouldn’t want to be admitted into their college anyway,” said freshman, Kelly Mayorga.

SPRING IS HERE

Football Head Coach Mario Cristobal is interviewed by several local news teams on March 3 at the team’s first spring practice.

Holocaust survivor recalls experiences during lecture

DAVID BARRIOS
Staff Writer

Hedy Epstein’s parents were anti-Zionists.

Her family resided in a village on the edge of the Black Forest in Germany. Of all the Jewish children in the village, she was the only one to not be a member of the local Zionist group.

“My parents did not allow it. I didn’t understand fully as a child what anti-Zionism is, but I knew that my parents were anti-Zionists and that I was going to be one too,” said Epstein.

Epstein, eight years old at the time, would become a victim of Nazi oppression. Later in life, she would choose to become an advocate against alleged human rights violations in the region her parents chose to shun.

Epstein, 85, lectured to FIU students on Wednesday, March 3 as part of a lecture series hosted by the Students for Justice in Palestine for Israeli Apartheid Week. During the hour-long lecture, Epstein primarily focused on her work as a pro-Palestinian advocate while also discussing her experiences as child in Nazi Germany.

As a member of the International Solidarity Movement, a pro-Palestinian group that practices non-violence, Epstein has traveled to the region five times since 2003. During her trips, she claims to have witnessed violence committed by Israeli soldiers against Palestinian citizens.

During one trip, while at an Israeli checkpoint, she claims to have seen Israeli Defense Forces firing into a crowd she was in.

“At first, I thought they were shooting into the air, trying to get us to go away. But they were shooting directly at us. The first person who was critically injured, his aorta severed, was a young Israeli who had just been discharged from the military two weeks earlier,” said Epstein.

On another trip, Epstein was detained by security at Ben Gurion Airport for several hours and subjected to a full strip and cavity search. After five hours, Epstein was allowed to leave.

“I was so sick and furious,” said Epstein.

Epstein also discussed some of the discrimination she received while living in Nazi Germany, including her math teacher who was a member of the Schutzstaffel and wore his uniform to school daily.

“One day he pointed at me and said ‘Get out, you dirty Jew.’ And that was my last day of school in Germany,” said Epstein.

She would flee the Nazi regime along with 10,000 other children as part of the Kindertransport, settling in England before the Second World War broke out. All but two of her family members were killed during the ensuing genocide.

Epstein had mixed feelings about the establishment of the state of Israel when she first heard the news in 1948.

“On one hand, I was very glad that there was a place for Jews to go to who perhaps choose to or could not go back to the places where they originally came from. On the other hand, remembering my parent’s ardent anti-Zionism, I was afraid somewhere down the road no good would come of it,” explained Epstein.

Her thoughts on Israel
Human rights violations discussed, some audience members disagree

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While there are critics for this recruitment method, some students feel that whatever is posted on Facebook is in the public domain, and should contribute to a student’s college admission.

“If you put something on the Internet, it’s no longer personal. There is always ways to get into Facebook that are on private. Personally, I don’t even curse on Facebook or put pictures of me drinking—even though I’m over 21—because I don’t know if a future employer will search me up,” said John Lunkert, senior.

Collegiate admissions offices are not the only services that are implementing social media sites into their recruitment process.

“It should be known that a lot of employers search for further investigation on the applicants they’re considering. However, this tends to occur during the final hiring processes, when it’s almost a fact that the person will be chosen,” said Kyra Spence, assistant director at Career Services.

According to Spence, employers look to Facebook for patterns of behavior.

Potential employers can look at posts and pictures to see whether a student displays responsible or irresponsible behavior.

A student’s references about past employers or other professional connections can also affect an employer’s decision.

“Negative comments about previous jobs would definitely turn employers away from the applicant. However, professional connections with different companies would turn them toward the applicant,” said Spence.

Whether college admission officers and employers consider Facebook for selection purposes or not, the University’s admission office advises students to maintain clean online profiles.
Golden Panthers hit the field for spring practice

IGOR MELLO
Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers will embark in a month-long journey where they will try to take this football program, a program that shattered most of the school record books last season, to the next level.

The Sun Belt champions are back on the gridiron for the launch of spring practice.

Mario Cristobal’s crew took the field on March 3-5 to begin their title defense. The weekend practices ended with a spring scrimmage on March 5. Practice will be held nearly three to four times a week, leading up to the annual Blue vs. Gold spring game, which has been tentatively set for April 2.

“It looked like a padded practice, so that’s a good sign,” Cristobal said.

According to Cristobal, he credits the players that continue the success, when you have success with it, it’s the players that continue the success, not someone coming in there and coaching them a certain way.”

Most of the faces that fans here at FIU have grown accustomed to are now gone.

Orlando will try to continue what Collins’ defense accomplished here in 2010 without the likes of linebacker Toronto Smith and corner- back Anthony Gaitor. Smith nearly led the team with tackles last season, recording 91, good enough to rank second on the team. Gaitor recorded two interceptions last season, including a 54-yard return that nearly led FIU to its first win over a Bowl Championship Series school.

In fact, Orlando will only have seven starters returning, which makes spring practice important for the coaching staff in terms of finding new roles.

“We’re always looking to improve. We have identified things by position,” said Cristobal. “Some of them are schematics which we really cannot talk about it.”

That’s where the four new additions to the defense come in.

Tevin Blanchard, Jordan Hunt, Richard Leonard and Elijah Macey all took part of the spring workouts for the first time as a Golden Panther. Blanchard, a defensive back, and Hunt, a linebacker are both junior college transfers and could play a role in filling in the void left by Anthony Gaitor and Toronto Smith.

Leonard and Macey are both freshmen working out with the team for the first time.

Offensively, the only new face for the spring is Blaine Dalton, who transferred from Missouri after being arrested in 2009 on the suspicion of driving while intoxicated. Dalton, a quarterback, also spent time at Fort Scott CC in Kansas.

“He’s very practical about his life and doing things the right way,” Cristobal said, regarding Dalton’s life after Missouri. “One thing about college football is that sometimes guys come in highly touted but we’re always going to be more concerned about how they adapt and how they play."

The team participates in warm-up drills prior to their first spring practice on Mar. 3 at FIU Stadium.

FOOTBALL

Maisak takes deciding match in win over UNLV

BRANDON WISE
Contributing Writer

Following another solid victory over Eastern Michigan, the Golden Panthers continued to stay hot with a 4-3 win over the University of Nevada Las Vegas March 5. Coach Melissa Applebaum-Dall’au was very excited about how the girls performed.

“The girls played extremely well today,” Applebaum- Dall’au said. “They battled hard out there and earned every point.”

The Panthers overcame an early deficit in the doubles portion of the day, starting out 1-0. The team of Lisa Johnson and Rita Maisak were the only team that was victorious.

After that, the Panthers came out strong in the singles portion. Senior Liset Brito, ranked number 98 nationally, defeated Lucía Batta, ranked number 77 nationally, in straight sets (6-1, 6-3). Senior Maria Spenceley defeated Adrienn Hidvégi with a three set tie break (6-3, 6-7, 7-5). Christine Serendi also picked up a solid victory in her match (6-2, 6-4).

With the match tied, it came down to sophomore Rita Maisak against Jana Albers. The match down to a third-set tiebreaker, which Maisak won (7-5, 7-7, 7-6).

“I feel that we are doing things right,” Applebaum-Dall’au said. “They pushed us to earn the win today, but I still felt like we were the better team.”

It was definitely a match that could have taken the Golden Panthers out of their comfort zone, seeing as the game was being played in Fresno, CA, but Coach Applebaum-Dall’au would not let it be an excuse.

“I was not about to let the girls use that as an excuse if we lost,” Applebaum-Dall’au said. “It is still tennis. I didn’t change anything from our routine of preparation for this match. We just had to go out and execute and we did.”

With the win today, the Golden Panthers improve to 5-5 on the season and have now won four straight matches. This was also the Panthers first road win of the season. It is a huge step in the right direction for the team.

The team has definitely seemed to hit their stride at the right time of the year, seeing as this is when most of the conference matchups will start to be played.
Late scores lifts FIU to wins over Seton Hall

ANDRES LEON
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers came out the rain in the second game of a three-game series against Seton Hall on Mar. 5 and won a close 4-3 game against the Pirates and giving Turtle Thomas his 100th victory as the head coach of FIU.

With no hits in the first inning and Seton Hall ace Joe DiRocco moved up from Sunday to start, things wouldn’t be easy for FIU’s high-powered offense.

“DiRocco is one the best pitchers out there in college ball,” Thomas said. “We figured him out eventually and our bullpen has been playing well.”

But Rudy Flores turned things around for the Golden Panthers with his second homer of the season, driving a fly ball deep to left field gave FIU an early run lead in the second inning.

“Honestly I wasn’t trying to hit homerun, I was just trying to get on base but it felt amazing to get that run,” Flores said.

Iosmel Leon was hit by pitch later on in the inning to load the bases for leadoff hitter Pablo Bermudez to try and make something happen. Bermudez was able to hit a bouncing ground ball into center field bringing in two runs for FIU (10-2).

The Pirates would quiet the Golden Panther offense for the next several innings, allowing Seton Hall to rally back into the game.

With runners on base, Connor Delepine and Chris Selden would bring in two runs to make it a one-run game in the fourth.

After another dry inning, the Huskies would find their way back to the scoreboard in the top of the sixth to tie the game.

The game turned into another pitching duel on Saturday night between both bullpens battling into the later innings.

D.J. Swatscheko came in for FIU in the eighth and the lefty would come on to get three straight strikeouts.

However, Haig would overcome adversity and bounce back, pitching 6-1-3 innings on the nights getting seven strikeouts, holding the Pirates offense to only five hits and keeping them from taking the lead.

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Pride and Prejudice is a play based on the novel “Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen. The play follows the main character Elizabeth Bennet as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education and marriage in her aristocratic society of early 19th century England. 1. Jair Bula plays the mysterious Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy in the theater department’s production of Pride and Prejudice which opened on Mar. 3. 2. Fadoua Hanine plays Elizabeth Bennet in the iconic Jane Austen tale. 3. Mr. Darcy (Bula) and Mr. Bingley (Robert Alter) act out a scene. 4. Mrs. Gardiner, Elizabeth’s aunt, is played by Victoria Collado. She’s joined onstage by Dana Chavez as Jane Bennet and Fadoua Hanine as Elizabeth Bennet. 5. Katherine Paez plays Kitty, the second youngest Bennet sister. 6. Elizabeth ‘Lizzy’ Bennet and Mr. Darcy have an intense conversation.
Nutrition counselor offers easy eating advice

Since Chapple has met with Mandal she can tell a difference, and she’ll be finding out the exact difference on Feb. 18, as well as every Friday until the program ends.

Nutrition counselors have been available at BBC since 2008. When Mandal started, a previous intern was just finishing up. “New interns inquire past interns for help. Interns create a folder and a book to pass on to the next one,” said Warren Shaw, assistant director of the recreation center.

The internship program is loosely structured. Previous interns have held presentations on topics such as hydration, acids and supplements. Mandal will intern during the wellness expo and the New Year Get Fit program.

“The program has been more aggressive since social media has gotten bigger,” Shaw said. “New Year Get Fit is kind of like the show ‘Biggest Loser.’”

The New Year Get Fit program will give Mandal a chance to work with the wellness center.

“We are working together on the New Year Get Fit Campaign being run by the Rec Center,” said Erin Freeman, senior health educator.

Once Mandal finishes her internship program she will be eligible to take the registered dietitian exam and become a registered dietitian.

Mandal hopes to practice in the United States for the time being. In the future, she plans to go back to India to help her people become more aware of health.

Lauren Khalid, a journalism student, produced this story in the JOI 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.

Women’s studies association hosts empowering events

ASHLEY LAPADULA
Staff Writer

The Women’s Studies Student Association, WSSA, is an organization designed for understanding the lives, problems and voices of women at the University and within the community.

The organization aims to make a positive difference in society, especially in the lives of women.

One of the primary goals of this student organization is to “raise awareness, host events, and volunteer in hopes of assisting our community in creating a more just, safe and equitable place,” says Lupe Juarez, president of WSSA.

Recently, Women’s Studies students, Christi Navarro (WSSGA) and Lupe Juarez (WSSA) were interviewed on “La Ley,” a popular program airing on GenTV. They discussed their experience in the College Bride’s Walk Against Domestic Violence, giving audiences the opportunity to be in the minds of those who have been affected by domestic violence.

Christi Navarro detailed the importance of having an event “on a college level so that students at this age can get involved and see what’s going on with domestic violence.”

Dozens of women dressed in white wedding gowns gathered in North Miami to march for this cause. A united effort was made to bring continued awareness to the ongoing problem of violent behavior.

Currently, WSSA is planning a nation-wide service project with FIU’s Victim Advocacy Center for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Apart from going out into the community, Juarez has also participated in events that involve students from all over campus but still keep the community’s vision strong.

“In the past, we have collaborated with SGA to host The Hijabi Monologues, we’ve held a midwife and natural birth panel, we have visited a natural birth center and we have volunteered for Lodge House, among other things,” said Juarez.

In addition, the Women’s Studies Student Association hosts movie nights twice a month with a professor from the department. Every film depicts a topic which either addresses women’s issues or was directed by a woman.

Throughout the upcoming weeks, WSSA is hosting their 2011 Conference: Women Who Lead. The conference will take place on Friday, Mar. 25 on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus and on Tuesday, Mar. 8 on the Biscayne Bay Campus. Women Who Lead is a day-long conference designed to further enhance the leadership development of female students at the University. One of its purposes is to develop the student body’s awareness of the scope of women’s leadership in our society.

The conference is sponsored by SGA and is free to all students. The Lunch with Women Leaders session is offered at $7 for students. The cost of the entire conference for FIU alumni is $20 and $25 for other community members.
Increased gas prices affect overall economy

**KELLY MALAMBRI Contributing Writer**

It is a well-known fact that convenience comes with a price. The increased gas prices since the Middle East troubles have cut into many people’s online course fees that take effect to truth to new extremes.

Without offering any proper justification for such high fees, the University charges students taking online courses $56.33 per credit hour, which most commonly results in a $199 fee since the majority of classes taken are three credit hours. The high fees for online courses are nothing short of absurd, and must be either eliminated or greatly reduced.

In reference to online course fees, the University has stated on its official website, “If we didn’t charge extra fees, we would not be able to offer these courses at all. The costs related to covering the costs of offering these special courses, the tuition for them will carry a premium above regular tuition.”

However, I personally have used the Blackboard system at Valencia College for online courses without paying a dime more than I would have for a class on campus. Other public Florida universities like the University of Central Florida do not charge more, whereas those that do, like Florida State University, only charge $18 extra per credit hour. These facts only add to the invalidity of the University’s explanation. Charging an average student in a three credit hour course $199 is not necessary to offer online courses, and University students should not stand for it.

After calling Financial Services to ask what the money from online fees was used for and being told they did not have an answer, my call was transferred to Student Services, the Registrar and finally to Financial Services, who then told me they do not have the online fee information.

In an online chat help session, the Online Services department repeated word for word the explanation the official website provides as quoted before.

This simple explanation, which is all the University has to offer, is an insult to students’ intelligence. It is not justifiable in the keenest interpretation of the word. Increasing the amount of the technology fee are students are required to pay at the beginning of each term could easily lighten the $199 burden. Although some may argue online students are not using all the fee services, neither are student health services or parking, which all students must pay for.

Furthermore, many classes taught on campus use the Blackboard or Moodle system and all of their features, however students pay no more than normal tuition for these classes. Obviously, the online course fees should be more evenly distributed between students, especially those taking courses on campus that are web-enhanced. The solution seems simple.

As noted in earlier Beacon articles, the University relies on money from the government, which is many times awarded based off the usage of classrooms throughout the day. It seems plausible that these charges may have been put in place to appease governmental standards by pushing students away from online classes and keeping students physically in classrooms.

Realistically, these fees are not affordable for students, and the reason for implementing them offered by the University is far from legitimate. Education funding cuts an unfortunate obligation

Governor Rick Scott of Florida has just released his first budget proposal in which he plans to shrink Florida’s spending by $4.6 billion, $799 million of which coming from education funding. Though education is important, The Beacon realizes that across-the-board cuts are necessary to get out of this budget crisis.

Every sector is suffering from the same fate, and no one is spared from these budget cuts. The biggest reductions in Scott’s plan include eliminating $1690 jobs from the Department of Corrections, an $800 employee reduction in the state government workforce, tax cuts worth $4 billion, a $4 billion Medicaid reform and, most notably, a 10 percent cut in education spending.

However, we must urge Scott and legislators that quality education on all levels, from kindergarten to college, should be a priority. It only serves to create an innovative workforce than can contribute heavily to the state economy.

State Senator Eleanor Sobel told The Miami Herald that she fears that cuts in the education budget would have long-term negative impact on job growth which would hurt students and the educational environment. Sobel also said that a strong educational system would attract businesses.

“If you’re cutting money at that level, you’re not going to attract the kind of business that we want to attract.”

Ultimately, Scott is not targeting education. Every sector in the state is going to be affected by the new budget proposal. Our job now, as students and educators, is to try to think of ways to maintain the state’s education at the same level, if not higher. All schools can improve the performance of their students if we put more emphasis on rewarding excellent teaching and by putting less emphasis on paying teachers based on seniority.

Steve Sauts, vice president for governmental relations, argues that an investment in public university is part of what makes us strong and what lays the groundwork for our economic future.

“The budget could have been worse. He didn’t propose a cut to our base. There are some increases that are normal every year, like ‘new space when we open a new building. But we’re trying to be positive and are working with the legislature closely,” he said.

According to Sauts, the University is in a good position. They have developed a three-year plan and made some tough decisions while anticipating tight revenue.

On Feb. 11, University President Mark Rosenberg sent out a university-wide email shortly after Scott’s budget proposal was announced, stating that the proposed budget contains no direct cuts to universities recurring base budgets, but it fails to propose a funding source to replace federal stimulus dollars that will disappear in the 2011-2012 budget.

These tough economic times. It is time for fiscal responsibility, and part of that responsibility is to understand that when it comes to balancing the state budget, across-the-board cuts are a way to accomplish this.

Yes, our education system should be a top priority for legislators, but that should not save it from the across-the-board cuts. It is time to think of innovative ways to improve the system with the money we are given.
Busy students and staff lose track of time and nutrition

LAUREN KHALAF
Contributing Writer

Faculty members have no time to go out and get food, during registration – payment time especially. Students come in and inquire about their classes being paid and financial aid disbursement and the faculty lose their lunch breaks.

"Payment time comes, they get super busy and stressed so they become unhealthy and stressed, and that makes it hard for your body to lose weight. It’s hard to burn fat when you’re stressed," said Priyanka Mandal, nutrition counselor at the Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation Center.

"Students are busy with classes, they don’t have time to cook. I’d like to be able to advise them on healthy snacking," Mandal said.

Mandal is an undergraduate student and was fulfilling her internship requirement at the BBC Rec Center as a nutrition counselor. Her goal is to improve the eating habits of students and staff at the BBC.

There are three parts to Mandal’s internship requirement: community nutritionist, clinical dietitian and food service.

As a community dietitian, Mandal offered her nutrition-counseling services for free for six weeks, which ended March 3.

"I cook healthy food; my courses have a lot of protein, not just burgers and hot dogs," Mandal said.

It becomes obvious Mandal has found a way to relate to students when she brings up the similarity of coming from another country to study at the University.

"The students in student housing come here from all over the globe and are all alone in a new environment. It’s a new country and new food," Mandal said.

Mandal started her studies in public health there and soon realized her passion for the nutritional side of health. As she became more aware of the possibilities of healthy food, she became more aware of the food she consumed.

"I cook healthy food; my courses have changed my lifestyle a lot. Previously, I knew about calories, carbohydrates and sugars but now I know the scientific aspect of food," Mandal said.

Mandal learns a lot from newspapers and magazines.

"I find recipes out of the American Institute for Cancer Research," Mandal said.

Mandal is tried various ways to inform BBC students and staff of her services. She mentioned newsletters, workshops, seminars and expos.

"It’s our duty to make [students] aware of what options they have," Mandal.

The idea is for faculty and students who want better their nutrition to come to Mandal with their wants and needs. Once Mandal learned the desires of the client, she conducted research on diet and fitness plans that would supply the best results for that person.

When Mandal isn’t indoors researching diet and fitness plans, she’s researching outside.

"With each person I learn more. When it’s on the field, I’m utilizing not only science but common sense," Mandal said.

Mandal is an international student from India, is in the U.S. on a student visa. There is little awareness of healthy foods in India, according to Mandal.

"When I came here I didn’t know what the American diet consisted of. Americans need more of a variety, not just burgers and hot dogs," Mandal said.

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