Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen speaks on US foreign policy

PHILIPPE BUTEAU
News Director

An alumna of the University and a leader in the U.S. House of Representatives greeted all participants to her lecture with a smile and a handshake before they took their seats.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen visited on Oct. 21 to give students, faculty and staff a lecture on the challenges facing U.S. foreign policy in the Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall at the College of Law.

Ros-Lehtinen had a standing invitation from John Stack, a professor and director of the School of International and Public Relations.

President Mark Rosenberg introduced Ros-Lehtinen, who earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education in 1975 and 1986, respectively. When she eventually started speaking at the podium, Ros-Lehtinen whispered the name of the University where she received her doctorate, the University of Miami.

Because of her position and the importance of foreign policy in the U.S. and abroad, Rosenberg said Ros-Lehtinen is at the right place and at the right time.

“Whether it’s Cuba, Central Africa, Iran, Iraq – you name it – our graduate is deeply involved in developing and shaping our foreign policy,” Rosenberg said.

Ros-Lehtinen represents Florida’s 18th Congressional District and is chairwoman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Her lecture was based around the committee’s area of concentration, but she started speaking about the economy and the important role it plays in foreign affairs.

“The economy is the foundation upon which our national security efforts are based – both domestic and international,” Rosenberg said.

The University of Miami is at the right place and the right time, Rosenberg said, and is the right place at the right time.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, page 2

New housing complex to be completed by 2015

DIANE ARIAS
Staff Writer

To help meet the need for on-campus housing, the University has made plans to accommodate the demand by constructing Parkview, a new housing complex consisting of two phases.

Currently, there are just under 3,000 students who live on Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay Campus combined and, according to James Wassenaar, executive director of Student Affairs Operations and Auxiliary Services. Among the students living on-campus, 10 percent of full-time students are occupying the housing units located on both campuses.

The on-campus housing capacity is 3,000 students. With a wait-list of 500 students, the fall 2011 semester has resulted in the University being unable to house all students who desire on-campus housing; residence halls were filled to capacity, leaving the 500 wait-listed students without a place to stay.

“Phase I will be built on top of the existing parking lot of Panther Hall, straddling the road and moving the road slightly. Phase II will be built on Lot 6, between the Performing Arts Center and the football stadium,” said Wassenaar.

According to Wassenaar, Parkview will not affect the preserve. The two companies, HADP Architects and HKS, will stay outside of the preserve and they are working to make sure there is no negative impact on the preserve.

Parkview will be built according to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver standard.

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system that provides third-party verification. LEED verifies that a building is constructed using green strategies. LEED’s aim is to have less impact on the environment on many levels, such as energy savings, water efficiency, carbon dioxide emissions reduction and improved indoor environmental quality.

“The University is interested in sustainable housing and in providing a high-quality living experience,” said Wassenaar.

The two companies were chosen by a committee of University officials. According to Wassenaar, the committee conducted a selection process that consisted of 17-20 applicants.

HADP, the principal company, will partner with another subordinate firm, HKS; the two companies are collaborating on the Parkview project.

HADP has been designing student housing for the University since 1995.

DORMS, page 2

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The College Board and News Corp. said during an education forum in New York put on by impose via an executive order a wholesale change in the used executive authority to accelerate a law that wasn’t some college loan borrowers at a lower percentage of their student loan debt as an “abuse of power” that will give somewhere in the community.

Knight says the Lego man is being well kept and hopes the giant fiberglass man can be placed on display somewhere in the community.

Bachmann criticizes Obama’s student loan plan

Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann stated a directive by President Barack Obama to ease student loan debt as an “abuse of power” that will give people incentive to dodge debt.

The candidates reacted Thursday to a decision Obama announced a day earlier to cap required payments for some college loan borrowers at a lower percentage of their income and forgive payments for others after 20 years. He used executive authority to accelerate a law that wasn’t supposed to go into effect until 2014.

“I believe it is abuse of power from the executive to impose via an executive order a wholesale change in the student loan,” Bachmann, a Minnesota congresswoman, said during an education forum in New York put on by The College Board and News Corp.

--- Compiled by Melissa Caceres

CORRECTIONS

In Vol. 23, Issue 34 of The Beacon, the article titled “Poor attitudes hinder progress” in the Opinion section, was the third of the year, not the first. Also, “Poor attitudes hinder progress” in the Opinion section, Ros-Lehtinen cited an example from World War II.

Ros-Lehtinen recounted a Japan would not the U.S. economic power was because once the full force of we can get its economy in order.

Ros-Lehtinen said, is determined by the economic health of the country. And economic health is “ever present in the minds of the folks who make those decisions.”

To further, enforce her point on the importance of the economy Ros-Lehtinen cited an example from World War II.

Ros-Lehtinen recounted a Japanese naval battle that initially opposed war with the U.S. because once the full force of the U.S. economic power was unleashed, Japan would not be able to match that power and ultimately lose a war against the U.S. For today, Ros-Lehtinen said it’s important for the U.S. to get its economy in order.

“Ours is a gigantic complex economy,” Ros-Lehtinen said. “It ranges from up of global corporations, to enormous financial institutions but we always have to remember our success depends on the small business community.”

Small businesses are the principal engine of the country’s economic growth, according to Ros-Lehtinen. She said small businesses are important because they create more than two out of every three new jobs in the U.S.

“So I’m confident that every one of you in here will create small businesses. … And it’s the responsibility of those of us in government to make sure you have the necessary tools.”

She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1989 – the first Hispanic woman to serve in Congress.

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Giant Lego Man May soon be released from custody

The 100-pound, 8-foot-tall mysterious Lego man that was found on a Florida beach may soon be sprung from a holding room.

Sarasota County Sheriff Tom Knight said Thursday that Lego-man could be freed from the shed where he’s been for two days.

The giant Lego appeared on Siesta Key beach Tuesday morning. “No Real Than You Are” was written on its shirt, along with “Ego Leonard” and the number eight. Local newspapers report the name “Ego Leonard” is the name of a Netherlands artist, but it wasn’t immediately clear who was behind the work. The story of the Lego man has gotten worldwide attention.

Knight says the Lego man is being well kept and hopes the giant fiberglass man can be placed on display somewhere in the community.

ROSLHENITEN, page 1

and foreign,” Ros-Lehtinen said.

Before U.S. military forces are abroad for an operation, what is it or is not possible, Ros-Lehtinen said, is determined by the economic health of the country. And economic health is “ever present in the minds of the folks who make those decisions.”

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“The company has a large national presence,” said Wassenaar to Student Media.

According to Wassenaar, the companies will receive $1.5 million for the Parkview project. The funds for the Parkview are formula-based; the state of Florida is prescribed for services depending on the square-foot area of the type of building. Florida State Division of Bond and Finance is issuing tax exempt bonds for the University; the University is selling bonds.

Phase I will house 620 students and Phase II will house 600 to 1,000 students.

The projected completion date for Phase I is June 2013. Occupancy will begin during the fall term in August 2013. Phase II’s completion date is projected to be by the fall term of 2015, but there are considerations being made on moving the completion date up.

“The University is invested in housing because it is a component for academic support as well as higher graduation retention rates,” said Wassenaar.

“The University recruits broadly; on-campus housing allows students to attend [the University] and the on-campus experience is important for students to have a more comprehensive education experience. Housing is important to the University as a whole; it creates a more diverse, complete university experience.”

Between fall 2011 and June 2013, the University plan to assist students without on-campus housing with the services provided by the University’s Office of Orientation and Commuter Student Services. CSS, located in the Graham Center, helps students find off-campus housing – enabling the University to grow beyond capacity.

“On-campus housing gets the students more involved in a school they want to be in rather than a school where they get in and get out,” said Oliver Diaz-Neda, senior desk assis-tant of Panther Hall and office assis-tant of the Office of Residential Life. “I think the University turns down the most applicants in the state.”

Student attitudes toward housing and a new building are positive but one suggested the University needs to add more infrastructure if a new building is on its way.

“I think that anything but the students is great to hear about,” said Katie Villalobos, a senior and English major.

“If they are going to build more housing, they are going to need more parking. That’s all I really have to say,” said Nicole Janiszewski, accounting major and freshman. “I don’t really have any complaints. I like living here; I can sleep in between classes.”

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Cyprien following the footsteps of Gaitor

Jonathan Cyprien changed his jersey number from 25 to 7 during the offseason, the same number Anthony Gaitor wore during his time at FIU from 2007-2010.
Egan earns double-double in FIU win over Troy

EDUARDO ALMAGUER
Staff Writer

Jovana Bjelica, the star outside hitter for the Panthers, is used to being the one player the team can count on to deliver in clutch moments. An Iron (Wo)Man, if you will.

On Oct. 28,Iron Woman brought her friends, the Avengers, to save the game.

On the heels of three Panther double-double performances, FIU beat Troy 3-1, (25-17, 25-21, 23-25, 25-18) and extended their winning streak to four games.

With the win, FIU remains perfect against Troy (14-10, 4-6 SBC), having won all 12 games against their program.

Bjelica notched her team-leading eighth double-double of the season with 21 kills and 12 digs. Junior outside hitter Marija Prsa broke out of her recent slump with her third double-double of the season. She had tallied 14 kills and digs, as well as a team-high .393 hitting percentage.

Redshirt freshman Jessica Egan achieved her first career double-double with 46 assists and 12 digs.

“The chemistry was really good tonight,” said senior Andrea Lakovic.

As the first set kicked off, FIU (15-7, 7-4 SBC) took a 10-9 lead on a kill by Lakovic. Egan, according to head coach Danijela Tomic, was doing an excellent job spreading the ball between all the players.

“We cannot rely only on Jovana,” said Tomic. “For a team to be a strong team, we need other players to step up and do better.”

The Panthers held on tightly to the lead, not once flinching when the Trojans would rattle off a string of kills to cut the deficit.

Lakovic, en route to a .500 hitting percentage in the first set, slammed down another kill to make it 18-15. FIU tallied four consecutive points after that to widen the gap to 22-15. Bjelica shut the door with a missile to end the first set, 25-17.

As the second set opened, FIU carried over their momentum from the first set and sliced up the Trojan defense to lead 8-4. The Trojans could not answer the wall that the Panthers would put up every time Troy tried sending a ball over the net.

With the score 16-11, however, Troy started finding chinks in the Panthers’ armor. They drew to within one point, 17-16, which then prompted Lakovic to spin back-to-back kills as the crowd roared after the ball found holes in the Trojan defense.

Prsa tallied her fifth kill of the set to win it, 25-21.

“She’s finally getting her tempo and getting her game back,” said Lakovic of Prsa.

Unlike the first two sets, Troy came out battling, exchanging blows over and over again with FIU. It was not until the Trojans took a 20-17 lead that either team had built a three-point lead. The teams traded points to make it 21-18, and the crowd could smell a win.

All of sudden, the Panthers collapsed.

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Troy shut down the FIU offense and took a commanding 23-22 lead that silenced the crowd. Though FIU tied it in the very next play, they lost 25-23.

“We underestimated the opponent a little bit,” said Bjelica. “We like drama, what can I say?”

“We didn’t deserve to win that third set,” added Tomic. “In the locker room we told them to play better and they didn’t listen.”

FIU opened up a 9-3 lead in the fourth set, but the Trojans tore it down to eventually tie the set 12-12. But once FIU took a 16-14 lead, they did not look back. They raved the Trojans and scored five of the last six points of the game, the match point coming on a Trojan attack error.

“All I want to do is beat [our conference oppo- nents] and send a message to Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee,” said Lakovic.
The wild, unsettling journey of Isabel Allende’s “The House of the Spirits” is coming to the stage on Nov. 11. Based on the adaption by Caridad Svich, the play will captivate students with its tale of the Trueda family, who find themselves enveloped in a tale of magic, mystery and violence.

“I always felt it was a fascinating, turbulent, beautiful, sensual and compelling novel,” said Svich. “Allende, working very much in the grand narrative tradition, weaves such a multi-layered, expansive epic family saga, and creates such distinct characters.”

The play, which premiered its English version on September 2009 at the Main Street Theatre in Houston, has since received the American Theatre Critics Association Primus Prize.

“The play is a response to the novel, my response as a writer, but it is also a homage to the novel. For me, it’s a living dialogue between my play and Allende’s vision,” Svich said. “I hope that fans of the novel come to this new version with an open heart and mind, and see it as a poetic distillation of an epic novel.”

Michael Yawney, an assistant professor at the Department of Theatre who directed “The Birds,” “Blithe Spirit” and “The Ruby Sunrise,” was chosen because of his previous experience with ambitious, large-scale productions. “On the surface it seems impossible to adapt, but Svich identified something buried deep in the structure of the story; she saw that the book is built on the power of imagination and storytelling to make sense of our life’s chaos.”

The production’s spectacular nature and use of magic will take the audience on a voyage to a world where time and space have no boundaries so that a woman in prison can talk to her grandmother and a dog that lived in the 1920s.

“Characters return from the dead, others travel across time. There are scenes in which three different times and places coexist at once,” Yawney said. “We spent a long time in design meetings, working out how to create the world of the play in which joyously magical events happen right alongside horrific ones.”

Jair Bula, a senior and theater major, who will bring to life Esteban Trueba, anticipates that students who come to see the show will get a night of good theater, and leave reflecting on their own lives and on the events happening presently. “In this play, there is military and police violence against civilians who are fighting for what they believe in. Right now, we see that all over the world; we see it in our own backyard with Occupy Wall Street.”

Bula, who played Mr. Darcy in “Pride and Prejudice” last spring, read the play and instantly fell in love with its rich and complex characters. “I couldn’t explain why I related to [Esteban] more than the other characters at the time of the audition—now I can. In my own life, I’ve known characters like Esteban; I understand his pain and his demons as well. The mistakes that he makes when he is younger lead to the ugly consequences he and his loved ones suffer later on.”

For Bula, the stage is always a back-and-forth feeling of fright and excitement, but he hopes to do justice to the story and his character. “What makes him different from the other characters I have played is that he is impulsive. Even as an old man, he’s still afraid of God; however, he is vulnerable and breakable at the same time.”

Caroline Spitzer, a senior theatre major with a focus in costume design, is one of the many students who immersed themselves in research to accurately represent the timeline of the play which spans four generations in an unspecified Latin American country.

“For me, the historical context, style and feel of the play dictate the way that I design the costumes,” Spitzer said. “I’m inspired from pieces that have been found from the time period that the character lived in.”

“Pride and Prejudice” last spring, Bula, above, said “I understand his pain” about character Esteban Trueba.

Senior Caroline Spitzer was a leading costume designer for “Spirits.”

PRODUCTION TEAM

Written, directed, produced and cast by Knowles, the film was his “vision brought to life.”

“Knowles, a senior studying information technology, spent $6,000 making his first film. The mistakes that he makes when he is younger lead to the ugly consequences he and his loved ones suffer later on.”

Right before the anniversary of his sister’s death, Myers escapes from the psychiatric hospital since he was six-years-old after killing his older sister on Halloween. Right before the anniversary of his sister’s death, Myers escapes from the hospital to his hometown of Haddon-Field, Ill.

Using a William Shatner mask to conceal his identity and a butcher knife as his weapon of choice, Myers has set his sights on a couple of babysitters that include Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis), who is babysitting on Halloween. Carpenter builds up a tremendous amount of suspense and dread throughout “Halloween” that becomes a prelude to the impending mayhem that is about to occur. Carpenter’s fantastic yet creepy score for “Halloween” is one of the most instantly recognizable score of all time.

“Scream” (1996)

Having created the iconic character of Freddy Krueger in 1984 with “A Nightmare on Elm Street,” director Wes Craven strikes gold once again in the horror genre with what could possibly be the last great slasher movie, “Scream.” Set in the town of Woodsboro, a serial killer dressed in a Halloween costume has recently murdered two high school students. One of the killer’s modus operandi is making a call to his victim and quizzes them on horror movie trivia. Savvy to the rules of horror movies, Sydney Prescott (Neve Campbell) and his friends use that to their advantage to try to survive this real-life horror movie.
Music reinforces theme of loss

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research I do. As a designer, I need to have a strong understand- ing of the characters and their world and Spitzer. Spitzer, along with Amanda Spieshaw, Ilona Matao and Danielle Yang, was in charge of designing and building a puppet of the dog, Batubabu. "It was a trial-and-error process but extremely fun. Prior to this, my only expe- rience was with Muppet-style foam puppets. However, from day one, the dog in this play would not be accepted as real if it looked like a Muppet, so we needed to take a completely different approach.”

The final design is inspired by the Handspring Puppet Company, which is based in Africa, specifically their design for the film "The Devil’s Highway." Spitzer researched everything from the mechanics of the puppets to how the puppets breathe life into them on stage.

The play will also feature original music by Mariette Gallor to accompany the story written by Sietch and a scenic design based on the use of 20th century Chinese music. Javier Figueroa, a junior and theater major, who is in charge of scenic design, has tried to transform the play’s design of loss, family and suffering.

"I’m trying to stick mostly to women’s voices, because from my perspective of women and their struggles.”

The production will run from Nov. 11 to Nov. 20 in the Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center at the Modesto MupiQue Campus Main Stage Theatre. Tickets are $10 for students and alumni, $12 for faculty and seniors, and $15 for the general public.

"I hope the audience sees the two people stepped on by their history and [how] others escape it. I hope that they understand their own past, their own pain and see ways to move beyond. I also hope that they appreciate their lives,” said Saywes. “This is the sort of play that you hope young people see with older people so that grandchildren, parents and grandparents can talk about the world of the past and the present—and what it says about the future.”

"TRICK ‘R TREAT” (2009)

"Trick ‘r Treat” never managed to make it to the silver screen as it got a direct-to-DVD release from Warner Brothers, which is usually not a good sign. However, “Trick ‘r Treat” is a surprisingly fantastic and memorable horror movie that evokes the sort of play that you hope young people see with older people so that grandchildren, parents and grandparents can talk about the world of the past and the present—and what it says about the future.”

HORROR, page 5

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"TRICK ‘R TREAT” (2009)
Occupy movement sees needless violence, cruelty

Smoke from tear gas canisters filled the streets, footsteps became heavier and hurried and the shrieks of women could be heard in the distance. This scene is reminiscent of Tahrir Square during the height of the Arab Spring, but it is not Egypt I am describing—it is America.

The treatment of protesters from the Occupy Movement by police officers across the nation is disgraceful. Free speech and the right to protest are part of America’s identity: peaceful protesters being met with violence from authorities is appalling and should be decried accordingly.

On Oct. 25, 300 officers from the Oakland Police Department stormed Occupy Oakland’s encampment in full riot gear to remove all protesters. What followed is some of the most atrocious and cowardly behavior committed by police that my generation has seen.

Protesters were met by the full “non-lethal” force of the law. While behind the protection of barricades, gas masks and full riot gear, officers launched a full-scale assault using tear gas, flashbang grenades and rubber bullets, successfully turning a peaceful protest on an American street into a war zone. This is not the way that peaceful protesters observing their constitutional rights should be treated.

While the majority of the crowd began to disperse to avoid the ill effects of the tear gas being used against them, members of Veterans for Peace stood their ground to do something that they are very much accustomed to doing: protecting Americans.

Scott Olsen, a 24-year-old veteran of the United States Marine Corps who served two tours in Iraq, was one of the veterans on hand to help protect the protesters. Olsen suffered from a fractured skull and brain swelling after being hit directly on the forehead by a tear gas canister. After being hit, he was immediately surrounded by protesters trying to help him; however, police officers took this opportunity to throw yet another tear gas canister right next to where Olsen fell, followed by a flash bang grenade. Olsen ended up hospitalized in serious, but stable condition.

Police departments across the nation should take a good look at themselves and ask: “Who are we protecting?” A poignant point about the abuse the protesters are experiencing is that the very people brutalizing them are encompassed in the movement; police officers, based on their average annual salaries, are indeed part of the 99 percent.

It should be recognized that cops have the most difficult line to balance on: between their beliefs and their psyches. However, behavior like what occurred in Oakland should not be tolerated from America’s police force. Oakland should take a lesson from the New York state troopers who, according to The Albany Times Union, refused to follow Governor Andrew Cuomo and Albany Mayor Gerald Jennings’ orders to arrest protesters violating curfew.

The Occupy Movement has spread from New York to Oakland, and various cities in between. Thousands of citizens have been wrongly arrested for observing their constitutional rights. Whether you agree with the protesters or not, what has happened to them cannot be ignored. Americans peacefully expressing their anger at a system that they believe has failed them should not be exposed to such gratuitous brutality from police; it is simply not what this nation stands for.

American literature ignored

The four Americans with the best odds to win the Nobel Prize in Literature this year were Cormac McCarthy, 78 years old; Joyce Carol Oates, 73; Philip Roth, 78; and Thomas Pynchon, 74—all of them novelists, all of them producing good work in the twilight of their career and all of them household names.

Alex Jordan

It is as saddening as it is frustrating to hear people say so casually, and sometimes even with pride, that they don’t read literature.

I start to think that my interests are superior, that sports, or music, or reading, or the arts are the places where deep thought goes to die and that these people who pass their time in anything but books are wasting it.

I get petty, smug and sometimes even out with them and the passing comment is made about “Jersey Shore.” —the contemporary intellectual’s punching bag—or sports or some new song, anything of popular interest that I know nothing about and which, consequently, excludes me from conversation, I get a little bitty.

Fitch Ratings became the first ratings agency to speak out on the European Union’s plans to deal with its debt crisis. “Greece would still have a large amount of debt outstanding, its growth prospects are weak and its willingness to implement structural reforms may dissipate,” Fitch said.

Greece has been living beyond its means, and its rising level of debt and its inability to reduce it accordingly is leaving the economy, leaving it unable to cover the remaining 50 percent of its debt. California State University economist Sung Won Sohn predicted that the crisis is likely to repeat itself, saying Greece would need more than Europe has allowed and will be in danger of default.

“Econ with Neda” is an economics op-ed column that runs every other Monday.
BSU, a U-wide council with little presence at BBC

BRANDON WRIGHT
Contributing Writer

Having been reclassified as a University-wide council within recent years, the Black Student Union is one of five governing councils that are responsible for garnering the interest and support of the student body.

As a University-wide council, BSU has been active at Biscayne Bay Campus in the past, but has had a limited presence there this semester, aside from general meetings and the BSU State of the Union Address on Sept. 15.

"BSU is really trying to be active this year," said Brad Owiye, BBC interim governor of BSU. "In the past years, we weren’t as active as we would like to be, and this year we are really pushing for more active participation from not only students but BSU as a council itself at BBC.”

Owiye said the organization tries to "increase awareness among our students, whether it be culturally, socially, academically [or] financially."

At the Oct. 26 Student Government Council at BBC General Meeting, Panther Power President Tamichha Roger asked Owiye, "Will there be any BSU events going on at the Biscayne Bay Campus anytime soon?"

Owiye alluded to the spring 2012 semester, which features Black History Month in which BSU is an active participant, but did not mention any specific events for the current semester.

However, it was mentioned by Student Programming Council President Catherine Vega that SPC and BSU are collaborating on a guest lecture titled, "How Good Is Sex" by Devin Robinson on Nov. 2.

But as BSU President Jerome Johnson admits, the biggest challenge with bringing not only BSU events, but events as a whole to BBC, is garnering interest from the student body.

"It’s not that in the past [BSU] has neglected BBC. Some students just don’t come to events at BBC,” said Johnson.

Information regarding future meetings can be found on its Facebook page, as well as the BSU presidential address. Later on in the academic year, BSU plans to host events for Black History Month at both campuses, as well as the presentation of Mr. and Miss BSU Pageant.

With the organization's intent to spread the word at BBC, its main focus is to make sure that BSU has a presence at both campuses, Johnson said.

Students can join BSU by registering through OrgSync.com. To be an active member, students must attend five meetings, or three consecutive meetings, throughout the semester and take part in one event committee.

Additional reporting by Jonathan Zydello.

Rubio’s exile story targeted

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio said those involved in politics these days have a tendency to exaggerate things. It's not like they discovered my parents were from Canada. My story is essentially the same one. My parents came to this country in search for a better life. They were prepared to live here permanently but always wished they could go back to Cuba," he said.

Rubio spoke at the University of Central Florida in Orlando and in Tampa, where he also discussed job creation policies.

"We do have a tendency in modern politics to exaggerate things. It’s not like they discovered my parents were from Canada. My story is essentially the same one. My parents came to this country in search for a better life. They were prepared to live here permanently but always wished they could go back to Cuba," he said.

Rubio spokesman Alex Conant later clarified to the AP that Rubio was referring to the tendency of "everybody involved in politics," and particularly some in the media.

Rubio’s official Senate website described his parents as having fled Cuba in 1959 following Fidel Castro’s takeover. But media organizations reported last week that Rubio’s parents and his maternal grandfather emigrated for economic reasons more than two years before the Cuban Revolution.

That means when they first came to the U.S. they were not fleeing Fidel Castro’s communist government but were coming for economic reasons. The website has since been updated.

The story gained national attention because Rubio is often mentioned as a potential vice presidential pick. Republican presidential candidates Michele Bachmann and Newt Gingrich and front-runner Mitt Romney have said he would make a great running mate. A number of Rubio staffers previously worked on Romney’s 2008 presidential campaign, and Romney defended Rubio at a New Hampshire campaign stop over the weekend.

The issue also was magnified because Flori da’s Cuban exiles wield significant political power and hold fierce passions against Castro and the island’s communist government.

Rubio, 40, has always identified with the exile community and maintains he may not have remembered the exact dates his family left Cuba, but they were exiles because they tried to go back to the country in 1961 and realized they did not want to live in a communist country.

His stuff says they never again returned after that.