Serenity Room provides students with an escape

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In GC 343, the silence is deafening.

The noise, music and conversation from the first floor of the University’s Graham Center fails to reach the corner room on the third floor – and students like it that way.

The Serenity Room, which opened to students, faculty and staff on Jan. 9, is a room designated for those who wish to unwind in a quiet environment.

Its uses include meditation and prayer, which for many Muslim students is an essential part of their everyday routine.

“To be a Muslim, you must complete five daily prayers and they have to be at certain times. We need to have quiet, clean environment, free from distractions,” said Sarah Usman, the previous president of the Muslim Student Association, who mentioned that she use to pray in the stairwells and between bookshelves in the Green Library.

The room comes equipped with wall panels to separate the space for each student. While they are allowed to bring their own floor mats, things such as incense, candles and music are prohibited.

“The idea has a lot of merit since it’s going to hit home with a lot of international students and even just random students who lean towards that path of tranquility and meditation,” said Sanjeev Udhnani, vice president of Student Government Association at the Modesto Maidique Campus.

As a pilot program for the University community, the space is open for use 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“Everything that’s being done now is to garner support for the Serenity Room because we want to show administration [the results] in numbers and how we’re going to measure that data is by having a pilot project,” he said.

Udhnani, who was behind the establishment of the room, said he had been hearing student concern over having a separate

Former BOT leader named chairman Emeritus

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Former Board of Trustees Leader, Albert E. Dotson has been given the opportunity of retaining his professional relationship with the University whilst relinquishing most if not all responsibilities, and named senior business consultant.

Dotson has been working with the University for three decades, most recently acquiring the title President Emeritus.

On approval of Dotson’s emeritus status, Albert Maury, who is the current BOT chairman said that Dotson “bleeds blue and gold.”

“I am humbled that the trustees elected to honor me in this fashion,” Dotson said in a press release. “I will always be a Panther at heart, and I will continue working to help the finest institution in the Universe reach its fullest potential.”

Dotson began his service with the Board of Trustees in 2001. Before then he had worked on the FIU Foundation Board from 1983 to 2001.

Dotson was a part of the BOT Presidential Search Committee that ultimately appointed current president, Mark Rosenberg, as the University fifth president.

Prior, he worked on the presidential search committee in 1986 that appointed President Emeritus Modesto Maidique.

Dotson has worked as the chairman and CEO of several business enterprises, and now works as a business consultant.

He is also an active member of the community, now serving as chairman of the FIU Athletics Finance Corporation Board of Directors, the boards of the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition, the Orange Bowl Committee, Santa Fe HealthCare

Online harassment still present in student life

DIANA MARTI AND TIFFANY HUERTA
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University student, Christian Rodriguez, remembers the first day he faced cyber bullying.

When Rodriguez was in eighth grade, he was hiding a big secret from his family and friends - a secret that could potentially break friendships and expose his real self.

He was gay.

One day after school, he confided in his best friend, Jose Pereda.

“He wasn’t very accepting of it,” Rodriguez said. “He had a lot of issues with it.”

This eventually led to Pereda ignoring Rodriguez the rest of the year.

Months had passed when Rodriguez decided to log on Yahoo! Messenger, an instant messaging site. What he found was quite surprising.

“He called me a faggot and all these derogatory names,” Rodriguez said. “It was a very difficult moment that I had with him and cyber bullying.”

Rodriguez got over it and has since joined Delta Lambda Phi at FIU, the nation’s first fraternity for gay men.

“I now help other brothers of mine in the fraternity with bullying issues,” he said.

Cyber bullying and stalking affect 99 percent of people over 18, according to the national helm online abuse research of 2011, but it can also happen at a very young age.

COMING UP | Sports

Check out the Jan. 13 issue for a preview on the women’s basketball game on Saturday, Jan. 14 against Louisiana-Lafayette.

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Experts say internet bullying affects person’s trust levels, self-esteem

**CYBER BULLYING, PAGE 1**

“I was bullied in middle school,” said University student, Marissa Gold. “It hasn’t been approved or funded yet, but this is definitely something of interest that we want to dedicate some space to,” said Carlos Carrasco, senior director of business finance and building operations at GC.

Depending on the size of the pilot program, rooms may also be opened at the Biscayne Bay Campus and Engineering Neartess.

With a small corner that is anticipated to bring followers of many different religions, SGC- MMC held focus groups during the fall semester to brainstorm any kind of conflicts and scenarios that might come up in the serenity room. In 2008, University of South Florida incorporated their serenity room into the design of the 233,000-square-foot, Marshall Student Center to give the institution’s 39,000 students “an oasis in the desert, a harbor in the storm of hectic campus life.”

The University also hopes to do the same by including the idea in the future GC expansion plans. “It hasn’t been approved or funded yet, but this is definitely something of interest that we want to dedicate some space to,” said Carlos Carrasco, senior director of business finance and building operations at GC.

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Panthers set for revenge against MTSU

Malcolm Shields
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Inconsistent Play
Head coach Isiah Thomas was not pleased with the effort shown in his team’s 54-50 loss to last place Louisiana-Monroe on Jan. 7. “Our [players] just got to learn that there is one way to play,” Thomas said.

One of the issues that have plagued the Panthers this season has been the inconsistent play from the guard position.

“We kept settling for the three [jumpers], we kept shooting long shots,” Thomas said.

The frontcourt of Dominique Ferguson, Brandon Moore, Gilles Dierickx and Joey De La Rosa has struggled to make a consistent impact for the Panthers on both sides of the floor. In their last game against ULM, FIU had a tough time establishing the frontcourt defensively.

“We did not have enough patience to move the ball and put it inside,” coach Thomas said. “Our size and our height is our advantage. We have to play inside-out.” The Panthers have been out-rebounded in their last eight contests.

DEFENSIVE STALWARTS
The one constant that the Panthers have had during conference play is its defense. The implementation of the 2-3 zone defense has been the foundation for the Golden Panthers this season. Through the first three games in Sun Belt Conference play, the Panthers are in the top five in blocked shots, defensive field goal percentage and three-point percentage. In all three conference games this season, the Panthers have held their opponents under 40 percent shooting from the field.

CONFERENCE BEST
Middle Tennessee (13-2, 4-0 SBC) enters the match-up against FIU on a seven-game winning streak after defeating Louisiana-Lafayette 65-53. Guards Marcus Knight and Raymond Cintron will provide an outside shooting threat for the Blue Raiders.

The Panthers have dropped four out of their last five games without the senior guard from Detroit.

PHIL TAYLOR
Phil Taylor (left) is third in the Sun Belt Conference in scoring through 15 games with 14.6 points per game.

For the sixth consecutive contest, the Panthers will be without senior guard DeJuan Wright against Middle Tennessee due to a leg injury. The Panthers have to keep improving and take our practices into the games.”

WRIGHT OUT
For the sixth consecutive contest, the Panthers will be without senior guard DeJuan Wright against Middle Tennessee due to a leg injury. The Panthers have to keep improving and take our practices into the games.”

Despite the size, sophomore Dominique Ferguson is the only big man to have significant playing time, since Brandon Moore was out for 11 games and newcomer Joey De La Rosa was out for a dozen. Gilles Dierickx is only a freshman and averages just 15 minutes per game. “We have size and we didn’t use it to our advantage tonight,” Thomas said after their 54-50 defeat to ULM.

“We practice everyday putting the ball inside, our size and our height is our advantage and we got to play inside-out, not outside-in.”

For the rest of the season, the only other team that FIU faces who has at least two players 6’10” or taller is UALR on Feb. 16. Once Moore and De La Rosa get more accustomed to the offense, an improvement should be seen in time for the conference tournament. No longer can Thomas try to rely on Ferguson being a force down low. If they want to stand a chance in the tournament, Ferguson must be moved to his natural position of playing outside on offense, rather than force him to try and go inside. Although offensively the size isn’t being used, defensively, FIU has allowed less than 80 points in a game the entire season. The 2-3 zone defense makes it hard for any team to get inside. Also, their length creates difficult spots for opponents.

What it all boils down to is not being consistent. FIU has not won back-to-back games yet this year. If they can play the way they did against George Mason when they completed arguably the biggest upset in FIU basketball history, or even when they traveled to Maryland and lost by just four respectful points, then a loss like the one against ULM would have never happened. At Middle Tennessee it’s a five-point basketball game, then we go to Western Kentucky and it’s an 18-20 point win,” said Thomas. “And then we come home and... well maybe we should stay on the road. We’ll keep working with the guys and try to get them better.”

Thomas’ team still struggling

Isiah Thomas’ third season as head coach of the Panthers’ basketball team, things have exactly gone as planned. With a record of 23-60 through two and a half seasons, it’s clear that something isn’t working.

Their loss to Louisiana-Monroe, who came in with a record of 1-15 prior to the game, exemplified everything that Thomas has had to deal with in his short tenure so far as a Panther. His team has been playing down to their opponent’s level. Not taking away from ULM but we have a habit of playing at the level of our competition,” said sophomore guard Phil Taylor. “If we can get back and do what we did from the beginning, we won’t have these problems throughout the end of the game.”

The team’s leading scorer DeJuan Wright, who injured his leg in the first half at Maryland on Dec. 14 and has failed to return since, can be used as an excuse to the team’s stagnant offense in their last game. They scored just 50 points and shot 32 percent from the field.

Just one week ago the Panthers were able to put up 81 points in the victory at Western Kentucky without him. Even though the offense has struggled to find that go-to player who can constantly give you double digit points, they shouldn’t have to. One of the big advantages FIU will have against most teams in the Sun Belt is size. Thomas finally has a team this year that is not extremely guard-heavy. Now that he has the size, Thomas must find a way for these big men to produce in the paint. They have four players that are 6-9 and taller, but none of them are averaging double digits in any statistical category.

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Wednesday, January 11, 2012
www.fiusm.com

MEN’S BASKETBALL

UPCOMING GAMES

JAN. 12 MTSU 7:30 p.m. THU
JAN. 14 ULM 8:15 p.m. SAT
JAN. 19 USA 8:05 p.m. THU
JAN. 21 FAU 2 p.m. SAT
Brandon Wise
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There are two teams in the Sun Belt that nobody wants to see right now: the FIU Panthers (11-5, 1-2 SBC) and the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (12-5, 4-0 SBC).

Both teams are riding winning streaks, FIU with a four game and Middle Tennessee with a six game. One of those will come to an end when the two teams meet at U.S. Century Bank Arena on Jan. 12.

The Panthers will have to find a way to contain Forward Ebony Rowe of the Blue Raiders. Rowe comes into this game averaging a double-double, with 16.7 points per game and 10 rebounds per game.

In their last game, the Blue Raiders trounced the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns 104-53, where five different players reached double digit scoring.

Heading into this game, the Panthers are on a roll of their own. In fact, the last loss the Panthers suffered was against the same Blue Raiders 58-53 on Dec. 21 in Murfreesboro.

In the last meeting, Jerica Coley was held to only 17 points and five assists, just making 7-18 shots from the floor. Other than Fanni Hultassa (13) and Finda Mansare (13), no other Panther could even reach six points.

The key will be on how well Mansare can matchup against Rowe in the paint. In their last meeting, Rowe was dominant inside, grabbing 13 rebounds and scoring 15 points.

The offense has been run through Coley, then dishing it off to Hultassa as she tries to find open space.

If Coley cannot find open space, then Hultassa will either shoot or try and get it down low to Mansare for points in the paint.

As of late, Mansare’s role in the offense is scoring in double digits in five of the past six contests.

Holy Coley

Coley heads into this game coming off her best performance of the year, where she went for a career-high 36 points against ULM on Jan. 7. For her performance, she was awarded the Sun Belt player of the week recognition.

She is the third leading scorer in the nation, averaging 24.9 points per game. Not only has her scoring been off the charts, but she also has 7.5 rebounds and 4.9 assists per game, making her top 20 in the nation.

Head coach Cindy Russo simply stated how great of an athlete Coley is.

“Jerica is everybody’s game plan,” Russo said. “We really need to execute our offense so that we can get her the ball back. She has to be everybody’s game plan, she attracts a committee to stop her.”

With three meets to go, Panthers focus on CCSU

“IT’s a team that beat us last year so we want to finish at home with a win and take that confidence to the next level,” Horner said.

The last meet that CCSU competed in was at the USA Winter Nationals at Georgia Tech on Dec. 1-3. The focus for the team is preparing for the Sun Belt championship.

“Doing the little things right, working our turns, our starts and our finishes,” Horner said. “Just racing properly and not taking anything for granted. That’s the biggest key right now.”
Students expected to break voting records this year

ELIZABETH FUNES
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College students all over America took a well-needed study break and showed up in unprecedented numbers for the 2008 presidential elections.

It is estimated between 22 to 24 million young people, age 18 to 29, flooded the polls to cement their vote for the next head of state, according to CIRCLE, a nonpartisan center dedicated to civic research. That is over two million more than in 2004.

In fact, amid the high number of young American voters, those with at least some college education are among the most represented voters. Four years later, and riding on the heels of 2008’s considerable turnout, we stand to find out whether our generation will be as likely to rock the vote, or on the contrary, if Generation Y will become the generation that did not show up.

“I plan on keeping myself informed on the elections and news,” said Gracie Aguero, a senior political science major.

Aguero, who was under voting age in 2008, said that she made it a point to educate herself in the loop with the elections and will continue to do so. Some college students have also taken a hands-on approach and provided the back bone to many presidential campaigns in recent years.

“I’m currently volunteering with the Newt Gingrich 2012 campaign,” said Daniel O’Quinn, a business management and political science major. “I think it’s pretty safe to say that I will become even more involved. With the help of other students from universities such as Barry and Florida Atlantic, these elections will prove to be the most pivotal in American history.”

In our plugged-in digital world, young people are finding themselves increasingly connected to today’s political issues. In 2008, youth voters said the economy was their top pick as the most important political issue. Eliana Jimenez, a sophomore majoring in journalism, said the economy remains her biggest concern.

“It truly is hitting people hard, including myself, and it’s definitely affecting college students because with less and less students can afford to go to school,” she said. On the other hand, for O’Quinn, the upcoming elections will center themselves on maintaining a country with a distinct moral compass.

“I’d enjoy seeing the next president reverse Roe v. Wade. We have the right to life, which is being utterly misrepresented, as abortions have been far too numerous. We’ve deleted a complete generation of people that could’ve been,” he said, regarding the heated debate on abortion.

Others say a lackluster job market will push our young constituents to the polls.

“We want to live the dream of having a well-paying job, owning a home and being able to have some luxuries. And when we grow old, we want to be sure that there is social security for all of us,” said Olga Urbina, a health service administration major. “Job security is very important; one of the biggest fears for a college...”
Student turnout in 2012 will "make up a significant 1/4 of the electorate"

FROST, PAGE 5

work in knowing that we uphold and maintain the standards and best practices of the profession.

It feels rewarding for all of us to be recognized for our continued hard work," said Damian.

Being recognized by the AAM's standard also has its perks considering that it can be a prerequisite for loans from other museums funding from certain foundations and local or state governments.

There are many foundations or philanthropy who will only give financial grants to accredited museums.

To be eligible for state funding, [museums in Florida] have to be accredited by AAM," said Blanton.

Being accredited shows that a museum is significantly superior in the field. "The Frost Museum took it upon itself to see how it measures up to the higher standards and elite museums in the country, and it not only measured up, but excelled," said Blanton.

"What this means," continued Blanton, "is that The Frost Museum is one of the best museums in the country. It's on the same car as The Metropolitan Museum in New York, The Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and The American Museum of Natural History in New York. It's right up there with them."

Indie band will put new material at pay-what-you-want price structure

HOTEL, PAGE 5

also includes five new records of previously unreleased material in 7" and 10" formats, along with posters and notes, creating the most complete collection of material one could possibly ask for. There are no "Live in Concert" Blu-Ray discs to be found here, and the extras are minimal.

The packing, in fact, is in itself rather austere and simple, creating a great focus on the records as the most important aspects of the box set, and allowing the listener to once more experience the magic this band provided in years past.

The total cost for this collection? $88, a fraction of many others (Pavement's individual records' deluxe editions range at about $60-80 per record); better yet, all of the newly released material will be available for download under a pay-what-you-want price structure at the group's Bandcamp page.

Ultimately, Mangum et al created a reasonably priced alternative to learn all about the band, discover its early material and obtain a better grasp of the evolution of their sound.

While both of the band LPs share certain common traits in their sound, the beauty of discovering the nuances in their second LP, the changes in the themes and lyrics, and much more cohesive sound, becomes a reward in itself, as "In the Aeroplane Over the Sea" was and remains one of the most important and influential independent records to be released.

The sheer agony and anguish in the vocals and the raw unfiltered sound of the percussion and guitars set a pattern that is still found in modern alternative music.

While most new bands try and revive the sounds of decades past, Neutral Milk Hotel remains at the forefront of independent music, its sound remaining as crisp and fresh as it was first released, giving fans hope for future generations to have the opportunity to experience it as well.
Laptop use should be limited in classroom

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Students at the University have managed to integrate the use of their laptops into their classroom experience, for better and for worse.

While most laptop-using students appear to be diligent in the classroom while using them to take notes, others wander into the Internet to browse websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and so on.

It is the time and age of those students that is being wasted, but I still find this to be an unnatural habit that should cease.

The misuse of laptops can prove to be risky for students since it presents yet one more distraction for them to overcome in focusing on their studies.

The only action I see fit to solve this problem would be to limit the use of laptops in the classroom. This could be by simply not using a laptop in the classroom unless it is necessary or by somehow integrating their use into the current lesson.

Of course, this would be to the chagrin of most laptop-using students who truly use them for taking notes, but it is not us though using laptops is their only way of doing so.

Before arriving at college, some students, like me, were exposed to the old-fashioned way of taking notes with a pen and paper without ever having to touch a laptop.

Some professors on campus do not even allow laptop use in their classrooms, and yet those students manage to take notes without them.

Those few students that use class time to check their email on their laptop prove that it is very easy for a laptop to become a distraction.

As students, we can barely afford to be distracted, especially, of all places, within the classroom.

As previously mentioned, it is the time and money of those students being wasted every time they surf the Internet on their laptops during a lecture, but limiting their use in the classroom presents the possibility that those students would take further advantage of their time in the classroom, having one less distraction stopping them from fully appreciating the lesson being taught.

Of course, limiting the use of laptops within the classroom would mean that most students would suffer for the act of few, but it would also mean that students would be one step closer to achieving their goals of excelling.

It would drive most students into changing their note-taking routines, but if it means making students more attentive to their professors, then so be it.

The only action I see fit to solve this problem would be to limit the use of laptops in the classroom.
Panthers sweep all 14 events to capture FIU Invitational

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When it comes to sports, there is nothing quite better than a sweep. "It was a low-key meet for us to finish up the training camp. It was successful in our minds. We swam fast and swam hard," said Randy Horner, coach of the swimming and diving team.

FIU began Saturday’s meet by winning the 200 medley relay with a team of Elly James, Klara Andersson, Melissa Moreno and Kelly Grace, who swam a 1:54.47 for the victory. Shortly after, Karla Stevens turned out a strong performance for the Golden Panthers, winning four events on her own and winning one as a team. Stevens won the 200 freestyle with a time of 2:00.29, the 100 breaststroke in 1:12.52, posted a 55.33 time in the 100 freestyle and won the 100 Individual Medley in 1:02.40. Stevens teamed up with Andersson, Grace and Nadia Furgamia for a time of 1:42.91 and a win in the 200 free relay.

Daniella Meaera finished first in the 100 breaststroke and the 500 freestyle, with times of 1:02.35 and 5:14.56, respectively. Adding to the win total for the Golden Panthers on Saturday were Chelsie Kidd with a win in the 50 fly (28.01), Grace cruising in the 50 freestyle (25.45), Furgamia in the 50 backstroke (29.84) and Jean Madison in the 50 breaststroke (33.54).

Selina Bautista, who was named the 2010 Sun Belt Conference Diver of the Year, won the two events she participated in. Bautista won the 1-meter dive scoring 301.33 and the 3-meter dive scoring 321.82.

University’s Student Associate Program hosts countdown BBQ

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Students will be able to get involved and sign up for the Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival presented by Food & Wine Magazine on Jan. 12. The Student Associate Program will host a welcome barbecue, “Reach the Beach: Count Down to the SOBE WFF.”

It’s the first week of school, so maybe there are some people that are shy, but when it’s a friendly environment, it’s a lot easier for students to get to know each other, to get to know us and register for the festival,” said Vanessa Rajnish, senior, hospitality major and Student Associate Program apprentice.

The FIU Student Associate Program is an initiative to present FIU hospitality and student success with the opportunity to network with professionals within the International Hospitality Industry, according to the event website.

The welcome back barbecue has happened in previous years; however, this is the first time it is directly involved with SOBE WFF.

“We invited the event managers from the festival to come down, a lot of the key players that put together the festival will be there, so it’s a great opportunity to get face time with people that are going to be in South Beach that are going to be mentoring you,” said Richard Joseph Lopez, MBA graduate student and Student Associate Program manager.

The event will have exclusive catering, barbecue, raffles and giveaways. According to Lopez, they’re expecting to receive 500 to 700 people.

Students are encouraged to register and participate in the SOBE WFF. Among the 3,000 positions available are culinary, front of the house, housekeeping, and media.

“It’s something special that FIU has,” Lopez said. “If everybody would get involved with it, they can see what excellent opportunities they have to round out their academic experience because it will give them opportunity to get some solid industry experience from seeing a huge large skill event unfold right on the center of South Beach.”

The SOBE WFF will occur from Feb. 23 to 26.

There will always be tough times, according to Jose Miranda, clinician at the office of employment assistance, while explaining one of the services that The TLC Brigade provides. "We help the family having to pay the funeral home approximately $8,000 to hold services for their loved one, the family only had to pay $400."

The group collects specific items, such as furniture and basic diapers for newborn children, and a food bank receives donations of non-perishables.

“TLC Brigade gives a helping hand to at need faculty and staff

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The beauty of our work is that we make a difference in letting others know that the University about their well-being.

There will always be tough circumstances. Fernandez tells a story of a family that asked for financial support for burial services. The family was against the family by leveraging the assignment of benefit feature in the staff member’s life insurance policy, according to Fernandez. "We were able to help the family for approximately $3,000 saying that they were able to save $10,000."

The group collects specific items, such as furniture and basic diapers for newborn children, and a food bank receives donations of non-perishables.

“We had a year when a family lost their home due to fire, and so we provided food for them,” Miranda said. Most of the time, people use the bank as a one-time occurrence. Yet Miranda stresses that if people do need ongoing help with food, then the Brigade will provide resources from food banks and food drives.

All of the food bank is for FIU faculty, staff and retirees, in cases of emergency, students may also receive help through the student’s council.

Donations are accepted throughout the year. During the holiday period, the donations exceeded the expectations.

“We tried our best to spread the word out there and ask people to donate food, and they were very generous for the holidays,” Miranda said.

“We received tons of donations from other employees wanting to help other fellow employee.”

According to Fernandez, in two years of existence, the TLC Brigade, lead by chair Raul Moncraz and co-chair Rosenberg, helped more than 500 people, including victims of natural disasters in Haiti, Chile, China and Japan.

"[TLC Brigade] is one little thing that at least we can do for each other," Miranda said.