Enviornment

Panther Dining offering new sustainable To-Go containers

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Eating at Pollo Tropical has now become the newest way to go green at FIU, as food sustainability takes the next step with the implementation of To-Go Boxes.

Previously exclusive to Fresh Foods, To-Go Boxes are reusable plastic containers designed to reduce the use of disposable styrofoam containers.

“People are trying to get more sustainable dining options out to the students,” said Celia Izaguirre, Aramark sustainability coordinator at FIU. “We wanted to offer more options to students who don’t want to use styrofoam and want to reduce waste.”

While ordering from Pollo Tropical, one-time refundable deposit of $4 entitles customers to unlimited use of the boxes at both Pollo Tropical at the Modesto Maidique Campus and the Grille Works at the Biscayne Bay Campus. According to Izaguirre, customers can return To-Go Boxes at any time and receive their deposit in return.

Izaguirre also explained that the restaurants take care of the sanitation, taking used To-Go Boxes at the time of purchase and serving food in fresh clean ones at every purchase.

“We do the sanitizing so that it’s completely unique burgers,” said junior Amanda Joffe. “You had a fun time cooking and stay organized,” said sophomore Rosanna Perez, a hospitality major.

Among the thousands of people who chomped on burgers, drank cold beers and mingled with celebrity chefs at this year’s Burger Bash were 380 stressed out and sweaty students.

The Amstel Light Burger Bash is hosted by Food Network celebrity chef Rachael Ray and a signature event part of the South Beach Wine and Food Festival.

“This is amazing both by reputation and man power. Thirty two different hamburgers were prepared by notable chefs, from local to national celebrities, to compete for the People’s Choice Award. Students of the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management were involved at every turn, from registration to culinary. “It’s hard work, so I give props to the people who make it happen. You have to be a people person, be there for the people and stay organized,” said sophomore Rosanna Perez, a hospitality major. Perez’s responsibility was to guide the crowd of 3,500 people in and out of the event.

Once guests were inside, they were treated to 32 completely unique burgers ranging from bizarre to devilishly unhealthy.

“The students are doing great. They’re really committed, very dedicated,” said Top Chef All Star Richard Blais of Flip Burger Boutique.

Students on the culinary teams put in 350 hours of kitchen prep time in order to get ready for the guests.

Once the event starts, being on line can be very stressful. Students are assigned to a task, like flipping burgers or adding cheese.

“We had a great assembly line going,” Ioffe focused on getting the salsas and pickles on as fast as possible. I felt prepared but I knew I was in for a long day because I was at Rachael Ray’s burger station. People love her,” said junior Amanda Ioffe. The culinary team backing Bobby Flay has consistently impressed the Food Network celebrity chef. “I’ve done this event for six years and I always ask ‘how many FIU students do we have?’ because they work so hard. I’ve hired many of them over the years,” said Flay.

There was a little friendly rivalry amongst the culinary teams.

SEE BASH, PAGE 5

SGC to deliberate on student activity fees

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Students’ Activity & Service Fees may see an increase pending deliberations.

The University Activity & Service Fee committee held two public hearings on both the Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay Campuses to listen to the concerns and opinions of students and faculty regarding the proposed increase in the A&S fee this year.

At the Feb. 23 hearing at MMC, several organization leaders pushed for the increase in order to expand their programs and fund around 60 student organizations and facilities on campus.

The committee that will decide whether to implement the increase is comprised of four faculty members and the president and comptrollers from the Student Government Council.

I came here, not to gain any sort of status and to say I met Lupe Fiasco at a concert. I came here because I wanted to learn.

Angie Luna, junior biology major

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see hearing, page 2

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Izaguirre also explained that the restaurants take care of the sanitation, taking used To-Go Boxes at the time of purchase and serving food in fresh clean ones at every purchase.

“We do the sanitizing so that it’s more convenient for students. You can leave it in the car or on your desk and eventually you come down [to Pollo Tropical] and we swap it for a clean one,” Izaguirre said. According to Josefina Salazar, manager of Pollo Tropical, the restaurant goes through 150 non-biodegradable styrofoam containers every
Individuals divided over increase

HEARING, PAGE 1

at Modesto Maidique Campus and Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus.

The increase percentage could be as low as 1 percent; each students’ A&S fee would raise by 50 cents per credit hour which would equal to $958,000 in more funds. The highest level would be 5 percent; each student’s fee would increase by $1.81 per credit hour to make around $2.4 million.

“We should push for a five percent increase as much as possible because every year in Campus Life, we’re pushing the envelope by doing as best we can with the budget that we’re given,” said Natalia Lopez, SGC-MMC public relations coordinator.

“If it increases, that can bring bigger events and bigger names [to perform on campus].”

The Center for Leadership and Service, Multicultural Programs & Services and Homecoming would be the University-wide organizations first considered to receive additional funding, according to Patrick O’Keefe, SGC-MMC president.

Several directors of campus organizations emphasized that the increase would benefit entertainment events like Homecoming, the inner workings of many structures and departments at the University, and the programs that develop leadership among students.

“Ruth Hamilton, executive director of the Graham Center, told the audience that the fee helps the student centers continue to provide services and job experience for students.”

“The fee has very intentional purposes and provides direct services to the students,” said Hamilton, who added that the facilities get their main funding from A&S fees.

Others felt that events on campus are less of a priority than other areas of funding.

“How can we make it so that the money doesn’t go to campus involvement activities?” said sophomore communications major, Christopher Knowles.

“I know they’re supposed to be good for recreation, but as a student, I don’t see their worth.”

In response, Bill Beesting, A&S fee committee chair and associate dean of undergraduate education, said that student government representatives would be the ones to pressure for moves like that because “that’s how the democratic process works.”

Angie Luna, a junior majoring in biology, asked a number of questions to the committee and urged the members of the hearing to stop trying to use its funds to try to measure up to other institutions by getting the biggest speakers and building expensive facilities.

“We have that to realize we’re not UM and we shouldn’t want to be like UM,” said Luna. “I came here not to gain any sort of status and to say I met Lupe Fiasco at a concert. I came here because I wanted to learn.”

O’Keefe was another among the individuals at the hearing who said he is opposed to any kind of fee increase.

“I don’t think that now is the time,” said O’Keefe. “Right now, I think we can suffice with what we have.”

Others didn’t feel the same way.

“If we feel like we’re okay now with the budget, what’s going to happen in three years when we grow to around 60,000 students?” said Robert Jaross, director of Student Media.

This week, the budgets for campus-specific organizations will be deliberated and considered for the additional A&S funds. Also, the committee will come to a decision this week as to whether the A&S fee will increase and if so, by what percentage.

Boxes to reduce Styrofoam waste

GREEN, PAGE 1

and the initiative is to reduce this amount.

“Styrofoam is not biodegradable and we can’t recycle it at FIU or in Miami,” Izaguirre said. “Currently styrofoam occupies 30 percent of our landfill space.”

Aside from the use of To-Go Boxes, FIU has also put in place many other initiatives to make Panther Dining more sustainable.

“We are composting our coffee grounds and they end up using them at the organic garden. Aside from composting we are also training our employees on energy and water conserva- tion,” Izaguirre said.

Panther Dining has also put in place reusable “Drink to the Earth” mugs, which are given upon purchase, give customers discounts on coffee and fountain drinks throughout the week.

According to Salazar, in the past few weeks since the containers were made available, Pollo Tropical has distributed between 40 and 50 To-Go Boxes.

“The program is currently in its early stages. It has received a lot of interest from students and we hope it continues to grow,” Salazar said. “FIU is taking a lot of great steps towards sustainability and Panther Dining is excited to join them.”

About the Beacon

The Beacon is an independent student news service that covers the University of Florida, as well as local and state news.

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The Beacon is an independe
Sports

Men's Basketball

Seniors start fresh against Jaguars

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On the night that DeJuan Wright and Jeremy Allen played their final home game in a Panther uniform, both went out with a bang.

Wright had career highs in both points and rebounds, 34 points and 13 rebounds, and Allen chipped in with 21 points, to lead the Panthers to an 83-74 win over the South Alabama Jaguars on senior night.

“I was really happy for Dejuan [Wright] and Jeremy [Allen]. They’ve given us everything in practice and play,” said Head Coach Isiah Thomas. “We’re gonna miss them, but they definitely made their mark here at FIU.”

With the win, the Panthers will go into the Sun Belt Conference tournament as the 10th seed and play the Florida Atlantic Owls in the first round.

“You know what type of game that’s gonna be. It’s gonna be close and it’s probably gonna come down to the wire again,” said Thomas.

After the game, Allen revealed what the goal was for the team at the beginning of the season.

“Everyone collectively tried to start out fresh. We tried to come out clean and it’s probably gonna come down to the wire again,” said Thomas.

The Panthers won their first and last home games of this season.

During the run, Thomas used a smaller lineup, with Deric Hill, Phil Taylor, Allen, Wright and Brandon Moore during the run and it seemed to work.

“I like when Phil [Taylor] plays the two, he doesn’t have to dribble as much and it makes us faster,” said Allen.

The Jaguars would not go away quietly, scoring in small spurts. An AUSTIN Rubt dunk and free throw cut the lead down to three, 72-69. It would be the closest that the Jaguars would get, as FIU finished the game at the free-throw line and with the win.

Now the focus shifts towards the conference tournament, where the Panthers will be playing on March 3 at 8:30 p.m. in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Thomas was happy that the team can go into the tournament on a winning note.

“It’s better going in with a win than a loss,” said Thomas. “That’s the thing about momentum, you win one game, you feel great. You lose, you feel terrible.”

Thomas used the win as tool for the upcoming SBC tournament.

“Coach put on the board ‘1-0’. We’re starting the tournament today and we can build on it,” said Allen.

When asked about the first-round match-up against FAU, Wright was simple about it.

“They’re our rivals. It’s definitely going to be a war,” said Wright.

The Sun Belt Conference may want to grow trees out of their seeds, but the roots are so gnarled it’s difficult to tell them apart.

Instead of having all 12 SBC teams make it this year, there will be only 11, because last place Louisiana Monroe failed to meet the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate. With 11 teams, the Sun Belt decided to take all of them, regardless of how difficult the task of seeding the teams has become.

The seeding goes like this: The number eight seed will face the number nine seed, six vs. 11, and seven vs. 10 on the first day of the tournament.

On the second day, the number four seed will play the number five seed, and depending on which team wins the eight vs. nine game, they will face either the East or West regular season champion (game six).

The same goes for the winner of the seven vs. 10 game (game seven), and the winner of the six vs. 11 game will face the number three overall seed (game eight).

In the semifinals, the winner of game five plays the winner of game six, and the winner of game seven plays the winner of game eight. The finals will take the winners of those two games.

If this is all confusing to you, don’t worry, it’s perplexing me too.

The Sun Belt can learn a thing or two from the Big South, which has 11 teams in their league, but can take only 10 because Presbyte- rian has not completed their Division One transition yet.

Therefore, the top six teams automatically make it to the second round, and the last four play each other in the first round to see who makes it to the quarterfinals.

If the SBC took 10 teams, they would not make the tournament.

If leaving one team out wasn’t cruel enough, SBC could be like the 11-team Ohio Valley conference, which with SIU-Edwardsville ineligible because of NCAA transition, they have 10.

Instead of taking all 10, they take eight, with the top two seeds automatically making it into the semifinals, the three and four seed going straight to the quarterfinals and five through eight playing in the first round.

Thanks to this setup, the Panthers would not make the tournament. That may be just what FIU would need as motivation to do better during the season.

Since FIU is going to make the SBC tournament every year regardless if they win a single-game, the only real reason to do well is to get a better seed. If there was a possibility of not making the tournament at all, regular season games would hold a greater significance.

Not every team deserves a shot to go to the SBC tournament. For example, if ULM had been eligible, they would have made the post season with two wins in the season.

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A team like that should not be rewarded with a chance to win the SBC tournament and get an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, and hopefully better fan support.

Also, the SBC can’t go to the extreme of the Ivy League and not have a tournament at all, and just take the team with the best record in the regular season.

A six-team tournament, with the top two teams getting a first round bye, just like how the NFL playoffs are run, is the best option for the SBC to go.

That way every conference game would have much greater implications than it does right now and you would get better competition and hopefully better fan support.

So, while ULM may have messed up a perfectly good 12 team tournament system, the SBC didn’t do a well enough job in making an 11 team conference have a better tournament bracket. By being too kind, they made things far more complicated than they should be.

Panthers tame Jaguars in overtime

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Down by as much as 16 to South Alabama, the Panthers looked outmatched in every sense of the word. Nothing was going right. Every shot they took was clacking off of the rim and every shot the Jaguars took was going straight in. They looked tired and slow. Head coach Cindy Russo said it’s the change of defense that got the Panthers going.

“We went into a zone,” Russo said. “We just couldn’t keep up. There was too much motion. When we ran our zone offense, it worked out well and we stopped it. It stopped the bleeding. There was a lot of bleeding out there in the first half.”

However, the Panthers battled back and found a way to get back into the game and senior senior Fanni Hutlassa hit two free throws with a minute to go in regulation. After South Alabama failed to score and win the game at the end of regulation, the game headed to overtime. Both teams traded two foul shots but then the biggest play of the game came in the form of a Hutlassa three pointer to give the Panthers the lead.

They never relinquished the lead en route to their 58-55 win over the Jaguars.

Jerica Coley led all scorers with 25 points, 12 of which coming from the charity stripe. She also had seven rebounds, three assists and three blocks.

“At the beginning, we started off a little slow,” Coley said. “But at halftime, we went into the locker room, huddled up and talked about it. We just really wanted to win.”

As to the physical nature of the game tonight where both teams were called for a total of 40 fouls, Coley knew that it
Panthers and Seminoles split first two games

EDUARDO ALMAGUER
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The last time the Panthers beat Florida State University in a baseball game, FIU’s winning pitcher had not been born yet.

In the first of a three-game series, FIU snapped its 22-year losing streak against the Seminoles after 13 hits led the Panthers to an 8-5 win on the road in Tallahassee, Fla.

FIU was last ranked No. 8 in the country by National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association of America.

On Saturday, however, FSU managed to silence the bats that dominated them the night before, managing to silence the bats that had their best game at the plate for Bermudez and junior Adam Kirsch walking four in 5 1/3 innings.

Though the Panthers escaped in the third inning, but the Panthers were not able to string together any hits.

After loading the bases again, senior R.J. Fondon was not as sharp as his season debut, but he managed to limit the damage, striking out two batters, allowing eight hits, and walking four in 5 1/3 innings.

Senior outfielder Pablo Bermudez and junior Adam Kirsch had their best game at the plate for FIU (1-3) this season after each had their best game at the plate for Bermudez and junior T.J. Shantz belted a two-run double to give FIU a 4-1 lead.

Sloppy defense in the third inning allowed FSU (3-1) to get back into the game with a two-run double to make it 4-3.

After stealing third base, Bermudez, the reigning Sun Belt Player of the Year, scored the first run of the game on a wild pitch in the first inning. Kirsch followed with an RBI single to drive in senior Mike Martinez.

After an FIU error set up an RBI single for FSU in the same inning, junior T.J. Shantz belted a two-run double to give FIU a 4-1 lead.

Both teams exchanged a second set of two-run innings, leaving the score at 6-5 as the sixth inning opened.

The Panthers rallied with two outs in the sixth, with sophomore David Vazquez hitting an RBI single to drive in senior Mike Martinez.

FIU tacked on a final run in the eighth inning with a Kirsch double, and then called upon their left-hander, prompting pitching coach Drew French to remove him from the game early.

McVay walked the bases loaded in the first inning, but escaped the jam by striking out the side. He was not so lucky in the second inning.

The combination of both resulted in 100 pitches for the left-hander, prompting pitching coach Drew French to remove him from the game early.

FIU had not won against a top-10 team since 2008.

With the win, the Panthers snapped its 22-year losing streak against the Seminoles after 13 hits led the Panthers to an 8-5 win on the road in Tallahassee, Fla.

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Gomez struck out three batters in the eighth inning for FIU, but they could not overcome the damage done by striking out the side. He was not so lucky in the second inning.

After loading the bases again, R.J. Fondon hit a single to drive in two Seminoles and give his team a 2-0 lead.

FIU’s pitching staff managed to hold FSU hitless until the seventh inning, but Ramsey struck again, this time hitting a solo home run off redshirt sophomore Albert Cunderman.

León homered in the eighth inning to cut the deficit to two runs, but the Panthers were not able to mount a comeback.

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“Expected it to be a physical game,” Coley said.

“There was a moment at the beginning of the game when we knew it was going to happen,” Coley said.

“We expected it to be difficult,” Coley said.

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Third time is the charm for hospitality student

Although Gispy Velez would not share every name she has had the opportunity to network with through her experiences at the South Beach Wine and Food Festival, you can tell that they are names she's proud to be associated with.

Velez, who is a senior hospitality major with a minor in beverage management, feels lucky to be involved with an event at the level of grandeur of the South Beach Wine and Food Festival.

“You have the opportunity to work with the people who are in the industry, which you may not get if you weren’t involved in events like this one,” said Velez.

This year was Velez’s third festival, where she played a variety of roles. Her first year, Velez was involved in registration.

Often forgotten about, the students who work in registration direct the flow of traffic of events, answer guests’ questions and more.

This role allows for a lot of observation, which is perfect for a festival newbie.

Her second year, she was involved in culinary. “I loved culinary. It’s a lot of work though,” said Velez.

More attached to her interests is the role she played at this year’s festival as a student coordinator.

Student coordinators are responsible for recruitment, hiring and training for the festival.

There were 16 student coordinators overall, and each is in charge of a group of students assigned to different events throughout the festival weekend.

At the VIP happy hour event on the roof of The Betsy hotel, Velez was consulting with festival representatives, monitoring the guest list and directing student volunteers.

The festival allows students of the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management hands-on experience that would be difficult to get otherwise during their undergraduate career.

Students are also allowed the opportunity to work with right decision by majoring in hospitality. “I loved watching celebrity chefs to event planners, and given a chance to demonstrate their expertise, hopefully to no recommendation towards a future job.

“It’s hands on. Where else can you work with industry people like we do? Some of the people I’ve worked with have offered career advice and told me they’d recommend me to other people,” said Velez.

The festival isn’t the only time of year that students are being offered volunteer positions.

Throughout the year, events like fundraisers and expositions send requests to the school of hospitality for student volunteers.

“Because so many people (hear about the University’s hospitality students) they’re constantly offering events for FIU students,” said Velez.

Fischer said their thank yous were involved in culinary. “I loved watching celebrity chefs to event planners, and given a chance to demonstrate their expertise, hopefully to no recommendation towards a future job.”

To his choice of charity.

Rachael Ray (left). The prize money will be donated to his choice of charity.

This event definitely“Three-peat” for Chef Symon

Burger Bash event draws $15 million

“Guy Fieri brought a restaurant,” said Blais. “I think he bought out an acre of land on the beach.”

Fieri’s team had an enormous line, both for the burgers and to meet the Food Network celebrity chef. Fieri took home the Hefin Best Dressed Award for his “Straight-Up with a Pig Patty” burger.

For many students working in the hospitality industry, networking is key. An event like Burger Bash allows students to work directly with successful and influential chefs, restaurateurs, distributors, event planners and more.

“I got to meet really talented well-known chefs and was able to ask them questions about their business. It was actually very surprising by majority of them are. I was also able to make new contacts within the school of hospitality and in hospitality, networking is everything. You don’t know who the person next to you is going to be in the future,” said junior Alfredo Diaz who was working at the little owl’s burger station.

Chef Michael Symon of B Spot won the People’s Choice Award for the third time with his Porky Burger, a pork and bacon burger topped with pulled pork and slaw.

Before saying goodnight, Ray and event manager Randy Fischer said their thank yous to the chefs and students.

Fischer remarked the crowd that all proceeds from the South Beach Wine and Food Festival, which reached $15 million, go to the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

“This event definitely assured me that I made the right decision by majoring in hospitality. I loved watching guests enjoy themselves and the food we helped prepare, and that’s what I think hospitality is all about,” said Joffe.
WHERE: Frost Art
Restaurant caters to nightowls

When so many running and ravaging from my Colom-
bian friends, I had to order the burger despite not being
much of a red meat eater.

Everything on it is the only way to go; taking
stuff off is doing yourself a disservice.

My friend ordered the chicken fingers, and I had to
get an order of wings. The wings were only $7.49 for
10, and both of our entrees were under $10, too.

After we got our food, we decided to test our-Fi, Score! The restaurant has
free Wi-Fi. You can create a free account to use
it, though, which is a tad annoying, but I see the busi-
ness sense in this.

Since you have to confirm
the account from your email,
you now have a working
email address for you. As
a business owner, I would
use this information to learn
about my clientele as well
as send out special offers
to promote the business.

By the time I was fully
logged in, our food had
arrived. Our order took up
the entire table. The burger
was an interesting juxtaposi-
tion of flavors.

The semi-art sauce at the
bottom mixed with a hint of
pineapple glazed up top, and
with enough cheese to choke
a bottom orange chortlet the
meat was almost secondary
as far as the flavor palette.

The wings were nothing
spectacular—rather small—but
the breadcrumbing was
interesting.

It was a similar granule
texture to the one on the
chicken fingers, as opposed to
the heavier coated feeling
usually associated with wings.

This burger was bomb! I
deserved the entire thing
with blatan disregard for my
stomach, (I am not a habitual
red meat eater, so it messes
me up every time) and then
continued to lick my fingers
clean. Who needs a napkin?
Not this guy.

There are several loca-
tions around town, but this
is the closest to the Modesto
Maique Campus.

In fact, they can deliver your food on campus. Almost every item on the
menus is under $10, and they have some appealing exotic items.

Play it safe with wings, try a Colombian burger or hot dog, or go crazy
and get quail eggs and marran-
tas (four plantain cups filled with
pulled chicken, pulled beef, pork bites and Colum-
bian sausage).

Either way, it is a good experience that pleases your tummy and does not
mug your wallet. Check out their 
website: http://www.
losperros.com.

The Colombian burger mixes both sweet and savory flavors.

CAROLINA SOUTO
Contributing Writer
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Almost 100 years have passed since women were
given the right to vote, and though we have risen above
the archaic images of a housewife and stay-at-home
mother, the glass ceiling hovering above the workplace
has yet to disappear.

Luckily, cracks are beginning to appear, and the Women’s Conference is back at the University, ready to
hammer away old notions of success. The purpose of the conference is to enhance the development of leadership
for women and to connect students with women who are leaders.

Events are being held at the Biscayne Bay Campus on
March 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in WUC 221, and at the
Modesto Maidique Campus on March 29 from 8 a.m. to 4
p.m. in the GC ballrooms.

“One of our goals for this conference is to show
women—and men—that women have so many choices in
the way they create their career path and leadership path,”
said Bronwen Bares, associate director of the Universi-
y’s Women’s Center.

Miss Holly, two-time winner of Food Network’s
“Cupcake Wars,” will be a keynote speaker.

“We really try to use this event to connect our female
students with role models,” said Bares.

Conference participants will have the opportunity
to mingle with women who are leaders in networking
events, followed by guest speakers Dionne Stephens and
Paige Telen.

Registration is required, but it is free for students and
available throughout February.

“I’ve been in the shoes of our students who are trying
to navigate between who they are, what they want to become, and how to get there,”
Monique Catoggio, director of Advancement, Alumni and Corporate Rela-
tions for the College of Business Administration.

“Being a student and young professional today can be
both exhilarating and overwhelming. As such, I hope to
impact upon all present my personal philosophy on lead-
ership—defining what it is, defining who we are as indi-
viduals, women, and leaders in our own right, and share a
holistic leadership model that I feel speaks to everyone,”
said Catoggio, also a keynote speaker.

While the conference is centered on women and lead-
ership, there is also much to be gained in practical areas.
At the MMC event, there will be two concurrent panel
discussions both women and men can learn from by
attending.

One will focus on competing in a tough economy, which
will be hosted by Shawn McNair, associate director
for University Career Services.

Another, hosted by Heidi von Harshor, director of the
College of Medicine, will focus on creating balance.
A third panel discussion will focus on how to diversify
investments, which will be hosted by Carolyn Runovicz,
executive associate dean for Academic Affairs at the
College of Medicine.

“I was inspired by many testimonies, and felt moti-
vated to continue pursuing my dreams without giving up
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**Santorum a viable candidate despite criticism**

**JOEL DELGADO**

Staff Writer
joel.delgado@fiusm.com

The merry-go-round of Republican candidates taking hold of the spotlight has been dizzying with nearly a dozen different people holding front-runner status and nearly all of them falling from that distinction nearly as quickly as they have risen.

So even, the erratic ride may soon be coming to a stop, and weary Republican voters may have found their man.

Rick Santorum is the latest Republican to emerge as the “anybody-but-Mitt Romney” candidate, and the timing of the “Santorum Surge” may just work to his advantage.

With the field rapidly thinning, conservatives have very few others to look to, but they may not need to look any further.

Santorum is possibly the best-equipped potential nominee of the four remaining GOP candidates to unite the three key sectors of the Republican Party: Social conservatives, fiscal conservatives and foreign policy conservatives.

He has the strongest record on preserving the lives of the unborn, including constructing and advocating the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003.

His “pro-life” label also extends beyond the womb in going out of his way to fight for funding to battle AIDS in Africa and leading the way in finding solutions to poverty in this country, boldly walking out his compassionate conservatism.

More intriguing is that Santorum’s favorable rating among Republicans is higher than the other candidates.

A recent ABC News poll showed strong favoritism among conservatives and Republicans and rising marks among a key bloc of voters in a general election: Independents.

In a head-to-head matchup with President Barack Obama, the latest polls show that it is almost a virtual dead-heat with Santorum. Momentum is on the senator’s side.

The latest Rasmussen and Quinnipiac polls, both released on Feb. 22, show President Obama holding just a three percent advantage (46-43 percent and 47-44 percent, respectively) over Santorum.

All the trends are all pointing upward for the former senator from Pennsylvania, who has thus far ran a mostly positive campaign, steering clear of mudslinging that has unfortunately marred the Republican primary.

OUT OF LINE

The opinion piece written by Brooklyn Middleton that was published on Feb. 24, ripped the personal character of Santorum, was an unfortunate rant that exposed her own intolerance and disrespect for those who do not share her views.

In her hate-filled diatribe, Ms. Middleton failed to mention that while Santorum does privately oppose the use of birth control (I disagree with the senator on that point), he has said publicly time and time again that he will not try and ban birth control if he were elected president.

“I just can’t talk about it. I don’t mean I want a government program to fix it,” Santorum said in a primary debate in Arizona on Feb. 22.

It is also characteristic of Ms. Middleton to resort to name-calling in order to make a point.

It is this kind of dialogue, which takes place all across the political spectrum, that stunts intelligent discussion and debate on a number of topics that our nation faces today.

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How do we go about getting the economy back on its feet? How do we begin to build strong families in America again? How do we handle the threats that face this country and its allies? These are discussions that need to take place, with civility, among all Americans.

So maybe Ms. Middleton can take a page out of Santorum’s playbook and focus on the issues with conviction and respect instead of slapping labels on others.

Our political system would be better for it.

To read Brooklyn Middleton’s article, please visit www.fiusm.com.

**Select sports teams losing points in student attendance**

**EDUARDO ALMAQUER**

Staff Writer
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Late last year, FIU hosted the Sun Belt Volleyball Tournament for the first time in a decade.

At the time, I was the team’s beat writer. The University had just advanced to the semi-final round of the tournament for the third consecutive year, and its match against Western Kentucky was minutes away from starting.

I gazed out onto the crowd and was shocked. The U.S. Century Bank Arena was barren.

The box score showed that 335 people attended that game, but that number had to be skewed, unless they counted actual volleyball fans.

Here was one of the more successful programs in FIU about to take on the best team in the conference, and the arena wasn’t even a tenth full.

A showing of 335 people meant that for every six people, there were nine empty seats.

This attendance issue isn’t something relegated to the volleyball team. It’s something that plagues just about every single FIU team.

I analyzed the home attendance records of the volleyball, football, baseball, women’s soccer and women’s basketball team.

Arguably the best team in the conference had a turn out rate of 50 percent, while the worst team in the SBC regionals, ranked seventh in the conference in home attendance.

Though the average attendance in the SBC for baseball was 39 percent of the team’s capacity, ULIM, the worst team in baseball last season ranked third overall.

The women’s soccer team, the squad that won the Sun Belt Conference Tournament had an average of less than 300 fans show up to a field that holds 5,000. That averages to about 1 percent attendance compared to a 24 percent conference average.

The women’s basketball team this season has been even worse.

Let us not forget that this is the team that showcases Jerica Coley, the athlete that is number two in the nation in points per game, and a lock to be the SBC Player of the Year.

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**Send us your letters:**

Have something on your mind? Send your thoughts (500 words maximum) to send.us.your.letters@fiusm.com or drop by our offices at either 5121 or 3628 S.W. 8 St. We reserve the right to edit for space, content and clarity.

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**SOUTH BEACH FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL**

**Barbara Corbellini Duarte**
Staff Writer
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As the palm leaves gently swayed against the sky, the Feb. 25 morning sun set upon the Whole Foods Market Grand Tasting Village on what would be a day filled with international sights and tastes.

The tasting village was one of the premier events at this year’s South Beach Wine and Food Festival presented by FOOD & WINE and host-sponsored by FIU.

Attendees walked along Ocean Drive towards the white sands of South Beach where tents were lined up.

As entrance lines shrunk, masses of people entered the village to try the festival’s selection of diverse options of dishes and drinks, and one could hear excited exclamations such as, “This is like Disney for adults.”

Attendents went through three different pavilions that presented more than 30 options from different restaurants offering food tastings, and over 50 choices from wineries and wine makers from all around the globe.

According to Manuel Cedeno, senior student of public relations, hospitality major, while placing some sandwiches in the front of the tent.

“We are loving it. We are loving the crowd as well,” said Goncalves.

According to Nydia Sandino, senior hospitality major, working as restaurant exhibitor assistant, over 3,000 people were expected to have walked through the village.

“We assist every restaurant, every exhibitor. This is what I want to do when I graduate. I want to work on event planning,” Sandino said.

Tanya Striopa, senior hospitality major, working in the Fiji tent, is an opportunity to meet the industry greats.

“You never get to meet the famous people,” she said. “I was at the airport. I passed every single one of them, […] all the celebrities that you see on TV.”

A doorm spin chefs gave live culinary demonstrations on site, including Sunny Anderson, Guy Fieri, Rachael Ray, and Geoffrey Zakarian among others.

Andrew Zimmern made the audience laugh by even giving a piece of his grilled octopus to one of the cameramen on the stage.

“It must be horrible to be doing close ups of food all day and not get a bite,” Zimmern said.

The dark cloud that loomed over the afternoon show slowly cleared as the public and celebrities packed the tents to try the specialties of the North and South Grand Tasting tents, which were covered.

Sporting events offered up over 150 wines from different parts of the world, including Spain, Austria, Germany, France, New Zealand, California, Chile, Argentina and Italy.

Chef Gabriele Forno, owner of a rice company in Verone, Italy, worked at the Tiramisu Restaurant tent.

Rickenta Wax, hospitality graduate student, who worked as a supply associate, reinforced the chance that students have to make contacts at the festival.

“I think this festival is important for hospitality students of any type of business so they can know who is out there and network very easily.”

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**ENVIRONMENT**

**Eugenia Nikitina**
Contributing Writer
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Fernando Bretos, a marine biologist and a strong advocate for the conservation of our ocean’s resources, is scheduled to speak on Feb. 28 at the Luna Star Café in North Miami. The event begins at 7 p.m.

The discussion will focus on the importance of the decade long collaboration between the American and Cuban marine science communities and how it has shed light on the significance of the resources shared by the two countries.

The event, sponsored in part by a grant received from the National Science Foundation, is a part of the East, Think, Be Merry Science Café Lecture Series hosted by the School of Environment, Arts and Society.

“The idea behind the ETBM Science Café is to create an informal dialogue between scientists and the community to encourage conversation and debate,” said Elaine Pritzker, coordinator for SEAS. “Rather than the traditional academic lecture, ETBM Science Café is a casual, interactive forum in which scientists share and discuss cutting-edge research with members of the community.”

Bretos is a research associate at The Ocean Foundation, which aims to build scientific collaboration between Cuba and the United States.

Most of the work is conducted in partnership with the University of Havana’s Center for Marine Research.

“(The program) establishes enduring, locally-supported marine research and conservation programs, contributes to marine science endeavors in the scientific understanding of Cuba’s marine resources, achieves meaningful, long-lasting conservation for Cuba’s marine ecosystems, and in the process, helps build capacity for Cuba’s marine scientists,” Bretos said.

The Ocean Foundation has several projects, which include: Project of the Northwestern Coast, Project of the Queens, Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Projects, and Trinational Initiative for Marine Research and Conservation in the Gulf of Mexico and Western Caribbean.

All aim to gain a better understanding of ocean resources, help conserve the marine environment, and establish long-term collaborative relationships between marine science communities.

Bretos has worked in Cuba for 14 years. According to Bretos, the biological, geographical, and cultural links between the US and Cuba unite the two countries more than they divide.

Bretos aims to engage and inform the community about his work in hopes that they will understand the importance of the marine resources, which seem to be an under-valued resource in the eyes of the public.

“The embargo prevents a lot of information exchange between the two countries,” said Bretos. “While Science is an avenue of exchange that is permitted by the US and Cuba, we need to expand our contact with Cuba in order to share important conservation tools and lessons and more effectively manage our shared marine resources.”

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**Student Government Council - Biscayne Bay Campus Lecture Series Presents**

**SOLD OUT**

Adrian Grenier
The Teenage Paparazzo

**Wednesday, March 7**
WUC Ballrooms
Florida International University
3000 NE 161st St. North Miami, FL 33181

Doors open at 6:00 PM
Event starts at 6:30 PM

"Free Showing of "The Teenage Paparazzo" March 6th & 8th - 4 PM & 7 PM - Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre"