Blue Ribbon Task Force recommends system reforms

MELHOR LEONOR
News Director

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As outlined by the report, these include the percentage of graduates employed or continuing education.

SEE REPORT, PAGE 2

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“One of my philosophies is to take everything that you learn here and you might have to take that knowledge and go somewhere else to help somebody else out or help yourself out,” Pereira said.

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Randa Ellmalki, junior majoring in public relations, shared what she got out of TEDxFIU.

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The Beacon – Monday, November 19, 2012

No compromise in contract talks between union and FIU

ASHLEY MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

The University and the union that represents support staff at the University could not come to an agreement for a new contract during the collective bargaining session on Tuesday, Nov. 13.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3346, and the University have been trying to negotiate a new contract since July 2012. AFSCME represents support staff, such as mechanics, electricians, painters, plumers, etc.

On Tuesday, AFSCME declared impasse with the University administration.

An impasse occurs when the parties fail to reach an agreement. Following an impasse declaration, a process of arbitration would begin.

The arbitration process could last six to eight months and will end in a decision by a mechanism that would be accepted as final by both parties.

The University and AFSCME were in talks over an extended wage package for support staff in Tuesday’s session.

“Even though we meet, it doesn’t give us any leverage,” said AFSCME representative and head bargainer, Madeline Gonzalez. “We’ve been doing this for too long.”

The University proposed a wage package that would give support staff a 2.5 percent wage increase during the first year of the contract, a 2 percent increase the second year and a 1 percent increase during the third. The University also said that AFSCME accepts a new three-year contract.

“The [union] bargaining committee has communicated that they feel the wage proposal is good,” Gonzalez said. “The union is proposing a lower pay raise in exchange for just cause. We are accepting your wage proposal, but not your package.”

Just cause means the employer must have a reason to fire an employee.

It is a form of job security that allows the employee to appeal the decision to an arbitrator who evaluates whether or not the employer’s action was justified with the employer bearing the burden of proof.

“The Board of Trustees doesn’t want ‘just cause,’” said Elizabeth Marston, associate general counsel representing the University. “The wage package is more than generous.”

In the negotiations over just cause, both the University and AFSCME remained grounded in their positions.

The University does not want to add just cause to the contract, and AFSCME does not want the contract without just cause.

Some affected employees present at the meeting saw the wage package as amore pragmatic solution.

“The employees are disillusioned because they haven’t seen results from the union,” said Carlos Fernandez, a mechanic who has worked at the University for several years. “We are more than happy to accept the contract.”

Fernandez brought with him various employee signatures he obtained during his lunch breaks, petitioning to put the contract and wage package to an employee vote.

“The raises are important to us,” Fernandez said. “I only know three cases in which support staff were fired and all three times the University was right in termin- ating them. They didn’t fire anyone here unless they are lazy.”

Gonzalez acknowledged Fernandez’s plea, but insists they continue to fight for the just cause clause.

“We sent out a survey to employees regarding just cause, and the responses showed that at least 70 percent of them wanted the union to keep fighting for it,” Gonzalez said. “We also understand the money is very important.”

At the end of the session, Gonzalez declared impasse on behalf of the union, saying that throughout the process, the union would consider putting the contract to a vote.

Marston addressed the potential fiscal cliff that, if unresolved by Congress, could raise taxes and spending cuts. If that were to happen, by the time the impasse comes to an end, the contract may not include a raise at all.

“Our wage package is contingent on [the union] accepting the entire thing,” Marston said. “We’re getting to the point where we’ve done the best we can. Our position is clear.”

Task Force report before Rick Scott

Due to the Lakeview incident, Student were granted three days of free laun-
dry. Everyone affected is taking advantage and all machines are running strongly.

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Corrections

In Vol. 24, Issue 41, of The Beacon, the capi-
tion for the photo titled “Parent-Family Future” should have stated that the next SOBE Wine and Food Festival will take place February 2013.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our OMC office at 305-348-2709 or BC at 305-919-4722.
**Breaking the mold on higher education**

**DIANA ANAYA**  
Contributing Writer

From elementary school to college we’re placed in a bubble in which our friends will always be with us and all we need to worry about is getting that degree. Real world issues and problems are irrelevant — what really matters is memorizing that chapter, spewing it out on a paper, and then forgetting everything you studied.

It’s a commonly accepted idea that the United States’ education system is lacking in almost all respects.

To be specific, the state of Florida has consistently ranked low when compared to the other states in education.

But what’s to blame — the budget cuts, the paltry wages professors make or the economic state of the country as a whole?

We can’t fix the economy in a day, and all the picketing in the world won’t make the Florida government give education the money it deserves.

However, all hope is not lost. While we can’t make sweeping changes, we have to power to make small ones. As a start, we can address the lecture format.

The lecture format — the platform by which I’ve mostly seen professors teaching — is one of the least effective. It’s essentially standing in front of a classroom and parroting back information from the textbook or on a PowerPoint (which they often have behind them) with extra facts here or there.

The students aren’t really taking in this information, but engaging in an almost mechanical movement of the hand, taking down every word without giving it a single thought.

In some classes, lectures may be considered necessary; but for many, they’re not.

Socrates used the Socratic Method, in which students would be asked questions and be prompted to debate with one another. This kind of teaching requires close attention to the material, critical thinking, and an ability to think on the spot, which can be immensely helpful in any career.

In the real world people must ask and answer questions, defending arguments as common as why you deserve a raise.

Of course this method requires the students to participate and someone always needs to be the first to raise their hand in order to “break the ice,” and once the conversation begins it can be hard to watch it.

Which brings me to my next point: the bubble. The material of many classes is locked away or memorization it requires, the level of critical thinking or memorization it requires, but because it’s static. All this information is locked away in a time capsule that has nothing to do with current events.

This is another point Socrates made, which is to bring present day issues into the classroom. Students would be far more interested in the material if professors made a habit of relating it to contemporary issues.

I realize all of these changes require an obscene amount of work by the professor, who may not have the time or energy to do so because of the many classes they teach.

Not to mention why someone would invest so much care into a class that the students themselves don’t respect, blatantly texting in class, showing up late and only showing up the day before the exam to ask questions that were already answered.

But for those professors who have the time and the drive, some of those ideas could be quite helpful. Because in the real world, memorizing a bunch of facts isn’t going to cut it.

-oilsson@fiu.com
How to deal with writer’s block

Dear Nick,

I’ve been suffering writer’s block and I can’t find motivation to write. What can I do to get inspired?

J.S.

Freshman

Elementary Education Major

Dear J.S.,

So often we are bogged down with multiple activities that it can be hard to focus and let the creative energy flow. Writer’s block, or creativity block, can be helped by slowing down, creating an outline of what you would like to write about and bringing your awareness into the present moment.

Once you have an outline, begin by just writing keywords—sentences. Once you have sufficient keywords in each section of your outline, you can begin to create sentences. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, you could engage in meditation or a mindfulness activity to help center you and push the process of writing. Take a break if your mind wanders or you become distracted.

Go outside and get some fresh air to help get oxygen to the brain. Exercise and let the endorphins give you a little kick. Make sure your environment is quiet and peaceful and let the inspiration guide you.

Your words are on the way; it is ready to spring forth from your fingers.

Be Well,

Nick

REEL TO REEL

‘Skyfall’ brings out the best in Daniel Craig’s Bond

To hell with dignity,” M, the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, says in “Skyfall,” the latest and arguably greatest Daniel Craig entry in the James Bond series. “I’ll leave when the job’s done.”

“Skyfall” doesn’t just keep its dignity, it breathes a new life into a series that is now fifty years old. Director Sam Mendes and writer John Logan have reminded everyone that Bond has a long way to go before he runs his course, and what great news that is. Betrayal and a lack of trust run rampant in “Skyfall,” as Bond recovers from a near-death experience brought on by M.

When someone from M’s dark past returns to exact vengeance, targeting M6 and all of its personnel, 007 is specially assigned to discover and eliminate the threat.

After the disappointing “Quantum of Solace,” it looked as though Bond was headed down a track in which he was entirely stripped of everything that made him more than just a spy with a license to kill.

“Skyfall” instead chooses to turn back time and deliver Bond at his most human, allowing audiences to see him at his best and worst. Rather than continuing Bond on the trajectory to becoming an action machine, “Skyfall” brings back the silly charm of vintage days. There’s a fresh introduction of Eve Moneypenny and Q, played rather well by Naomie Harris and Ben Whishaw respectively, plenty of humor written into a rather dark script and enough references to the Bond of old to keep most fans happy.

The film is gorgeous, courtesy of Roger Deakins, director of photography. His work is always top tier, but “Skyfall” features some amazing uses of shadows and lighting. A frequent collaborator with Mendes, it’s no surprise that Deakins is allowed to do what he does best, notably in the riveting final act.

John Logan, who rewrote much of Neal Purvis and Robert Wade’s original script, delivers a tight screenplay that brings out the best of both cast and crew.

Audiences will likely notice the influence from Nolan’s Batman trilogy, but that should come as no surprise as plenty of Bond films draw from the popular films of their time.

The decision to humanize Bond works in Craig’s favor, showing more range than the typical action star, especially in his interactions with co-star Judi Dench.

In her seventh appearance as M, Dench delivers her biggest and best performance of the series and that’s something to be thankful for considering the film’s story heavily involves her.

Javier Bardem, already well known as the villain of “No Country for Old Men,” is one of the most valuable players of “Skyfall” as the vengeful and unbalanced Raoul Silva. His late introduction to the film makes for one of the best scenes and his banter with Bond may leave some conservative viewers in shock.

“Skyfall” isn’t the best Bond film, but it certainly turns out to be a memorable one that will open the door to hundreds of possibilities for the series over the next few years.

Javier Barquin is a junior FIU English Major. For the past year and a half, he has written more than 80 movie reviews for YAM-Magazine, and is pursuing a certificate in Film Studies at the University.

Yanaisis Collazo

Contributing Writer

160,000 students will stay home today because of fear of being bullied, according to stopboutheating.org.

Bullying occurs in a variety of ways—physical, emotional, relational or online. Among the types of bullying, students also experience hazing.

According to HazingPrevention.org, 55 percent of college students experience hazing. The University’s Victims Advocacy Center and Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution take the cause seriously.

According to the university policy statement, any form of violence toward an employee against another employee, student, vendor or visitor to the University will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and may result in criminal prosecution, if federal, state, or local laws are violated.

Kirsten A. Kowczyński, director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution assures if you break the rules there is a series of steps to take after the occurrence is reported. Starting from an investigation and ending with the University’s Student Conduct process and disciplinary sanctions.

“Education on what hazing is and its negative effects is how it’s done,” said Kowczyński, when it comes to preventing hazing.

She said it also helps “to hold organizations [accountable] for hazing and show it’s not appropriate in the University.”

Hazing is associated with organizations, clubs and even teams. Ensuring it does not happen on campus, the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution ensures hazing prevention and sanctioned workshops to organizations. More specifically, the workshops are for the victims.

“If you report the incident, it actually increases,” said Kowczyński. “Alerting them of the situation instead of the key to stopping the issue.”

Similar Kowczyński’s views on hazing, Alexis Hamilton Fulks, assistant director of Sorority and Fraternity Life, already knew she didn’t want to join a sorority if it meant being talked down to in a demeaning way and forced to do things against her will.

However, after deciding to join a sorority, she realized it was not an issue here at FIU. Since Order of Omega and Campus Life consecutively plan a hazing prevention week annually, the outcome of it occurring is minimum.

“We are here to be educated…not be exploited to bad practice,” said Fulks. “It is against the law, a federal offense.”

In addition to hazing, bullying in general is another concern at the University. Many students who have been bullied in the past, or still are bullied, go to seek guidance at the Victims Advocacy Center.

Jonathan Batson, president at FIU’s Chapter of Minority Association of Premedical Student has been bullied in the past.

“From a personal experience in ninth and tenth grade, I was bullied,” said Batson, who was bullied through an online video on YouTube. “Sometimes it felt like it would never end. Now as a college student, I want to tell [other victims] that it gets better.”

According to StompOnBullying.org, one out of four teens are bullied.

“It is wrong that somebody is treated unfairly and unjust due to them expressing who they are as a person,” said Batson. “It is wrong.”

To prevent bullying, students are asked to report the incident before it gets out of hand, and most importantly, do not bully back.

To speak to someone at the Victims Advocacy Center, contact the 24-hour hotline at 305-448-3000.
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Dismal season ends with blowout loss in SBC Tournament

JONATHAN JACOBSKIND
Staff Writer

Before the FIU volleyball team took the court for the very first game of the 2012 season on Aug. 24, the unthinkable happened. All Sun Belt Conference teams were be stacked up by the No. 17 Western Kentucky Hilltoppers in the first round of the Sun Belt Tournament in a 3-0 sweep. WKU has ended FIU’s season the past three seasons in the Sun Belt Tournament.

The Panthers were able to sneak into the tournament as the eighth seed. However, based on head to head matchups, Head Coach Trevor Theroulde believed the Panthers deserved the seventh seed, which would have paved the road to the Sun Belt Finals. "When we made it to the conference tournament, we thought we had the seventh seed and start on opposite brackets than Western Kentucky and we said you know what, we can make it all the way to the finals again," Theroulde said. "However, according to some strange rule the coaches of the league voted on we were stuck with the eight seed." FIU hobbled into the Sun Belt Tournament as injuries swept the team, a theme that plagued the team all year.

Senior Jessica Egan played in only six games this year after having mono and Bjelica broke a bone in her hand before the first game which held her out for the season. It is uncertain whether Bjelica will take a medical redshirt to return for a fifth season.

The matchup against WKU pairs the two East Division rivals against each other for their 32nd all-time meeting. The Hilltoppers are in their first campaign under the reign of new coach Michelle Clark-Heard. Clark-Heard and the Hilltoppers won their first game of the season against Murray State.

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"Jerica is every one’s game plan," Russo said. "When they play us they say, ‘if we can stop Jerica Coley, we can win the game’ and they’re absolutely right.”

The matchup against WKU could not come any sooner as the squad is coming off a lopsided, 69-45, loss at Florida Gulf Coast. FGCU dominated the game throughout; they took a 14-point lead into the half by holding FIU to 25 percent shooting from the field.

The Eagles soared away in the second half, outscoring FIU 34-24 in the latter period. Junior Marita Davydova played a solid game. Davydova scored 16 points on six of 13 shooting and also snatched down a team-high 11 rebounds. Coley had a rough game. She scored just nine points on four of 12 shooting. Despite Coley’s shooting trouble, she still managed to aggressively pull down nine rebounds.

"This is a good thing to happen in the beginning of the year, because now they realize that we are not really good yet," Russo said. Russo recalls the first time her team was nationally ranked back in the ’93-94 season. Her team played an away game at Texas Tech, which happened to be the second ranked team in the country at the time. At halftime, the squad was down by 45 points, and Russo jokingly suggested during her halftime speech that the team just skip the second half and catch an early flight back to Miami. The team came out strong in the second half, though they still lost the game. They won the half by 25 points.

"They came out and they played, so that was the beginning of them realizing that we are there too," Russo said. "They realized how tough it’s going to be if they want to be a good team in the nation and right now this team has not committed to that.”

"Jerica is going to have to learn to distribute a little bit more. She’s going to have to learning to get on the weak side and start playing with more injuries." Russo said. "We need to get tougher mentally and do the small things to win the game."

Marita Davydova (left), a junior transfer from Moscow, Russia, is averaging 15 points and 8.5 rebounds per game as a freshman so far this season.
Senior transfer overcomes adversity after being cut on the line up, Theroulde could never find it into the conference tournament.”

Theroulde said. “We came from having championship aspirations to barely making

season in one word: unpredictable.

While expectations were high for

Ribi is not one to shy away from stating her expectations and has her eyes set on re-taking that record and many others.

Forde and the rest of the seniors including Bjelica, Marija Prsa and

The worst statistical seasons in program

I would like to accomplish, but I

I would like to be considered the best

Ribi loves the weather in Miami

I enjoyed every moment and what I

I would like to accomplish, but I

I would like to accomplish, but I

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Hopes of star outside hitter returning for fifth year slim

VOLLEYBALL, PAGE 6

season. Theroulde summed up the 2012

“From day to day, I did not know what team I was going to have on the court,” Theroulde said. “We came from having championship aspirations to barely making it into the conference tournament.”

With the constant shifting and switches to the line up. Theroulde could never find the team cohesion and consistent play he wanted. Despite showing a slight glimpse of improvement towards the latter part of the season, the inconsistency and lack of experience for the team resulted in one of the worst statistical seasons in program history.

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Legalized Marijuana sparks blazing discussion

MARIOSL MEDINA
Contributing Writer

While marijuana smokers in Colorado and Washington can legally "wake up," those in Florida shouldn’t hold their breath in waiting.

On Election Day 2012, a historic amendment legalized the recreational use of marijuana in the states of Colorado and Washington.

Amendment 64 in Colorado has legalized the recreational consumption of marijuana and permitted possession of up to one ounce.

Consumers may have, at most, three flowering plants and must be 21 years of age or older.

The news was celebrated with joy by cannabis consumers all over the states.

Ramon Garo, a senior in mechanical engineering, agreed with the legalization because of the disparity between the state and federal laws.

"Alcohol, tobacco and certain medicinal drugs have just as many or more known negative effects than marijuana," he said.

"Taking into account that marijuana’s status makes it more lucrative for criminal activity, it becomes pretty obvious that the federal stance is not only inconsistent, but irrational."

Shearon Lowery, associate professor in Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies, feels that the benefits of marijuana have been overlooked for far too long.

"It’s about time. Marijuana is less harmful than alcohol and has many medical benefits. There is no way that marijuana should be classified as a Schedule 1 drug," said Lowery.

She is referring to a categorization that places drugs with high abuse risk and without any accepted medical use in a Schedule 1 category.

Marijuana is placed in Schedule 1 alongside heroin, LSD, PCP, and crack cocaine.

"Hopefully, the federal government will start reviewing research on the medical benefits of marijuana, which was stopped by George H.W. Bush when he became president in 1989. However, other countries did continue to do research on the drug’s health benefits and it is extremely promising, to say the least," she said.

Some say legalization will permit the government to benefit from taxing marijuana, an industry that will generate considerable revenue to not only the government but to producers as well.

"According to a 2011 Gallup Poll, 50 percent of the American public favor the legalization of marijuana. Prohibition has obviously failed, just as it did with alcohol. Since prohibited drugs are connected to criminal networks of suppliers, decriminalization brings the trade into the public sphere where it can be properly regulated and taxed," she said.

In Washington, marijuana will be taxed at a 25 percent rate three different times: when the grower sells it to the processor, when the processor sells it to the retailers and when the retailer sells it to the customer.

Raquelle Rodriguez disagrees with the use of marijuana but agrees with the legalization. She said too many people are incarcerated because of charges for possession of marijuana.

"Considering alcohol is legal, there is no reason marijuana shouldn’t be legal too. I don’t think people should go to jail or prison over using marijuana either. We are overcrowding our prisons over dumb charges like these and minorities are being disproportionately arrested because of them," she said.

Derrick Christopher, a senior double-majoring in political science and international relations, said the state legalization is a groundswell for eventual legalization throughout the country.

"If, for one, will celebrate the day when some of the most peaceful people on Earth, marijuana smokers, are no longer made out to be criminals for growing, cultivating and using a plant," said Christopher.

ASHLEY MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

Student Government Association will look into a proposal that would create 10 new scholarships.

The Student Government Association will present today, Nov. 19, a bill titled The Student Body Scholarship Act of 2012, which is proposing to add Article IV University Wide Scholarship Code to the Student Government University Wide Statutes.

Article IV University Wide Scholarship Code proposes a Student Government University Wide Scholarship program that is designed to help students achieve academic and professional goals and it would help ensure that no student deserving of the scholarship will be deprived of higher education due to shortage of funds.

The bill states that earnings from available activity and services funds will be invested into student loans and scholarship funds and that 10 percent of the 2 percent interest allocated from the Student Government University Wide Scholarship Committee will be allocated to the scholarships as well.

It will also require the committee to review quarterly reports, provided by the University Chief Financial Officer and Comptroller and signed by both the SGC-MMC and SGC-BBC presidents.

The reports will order continuance and help determine whether the Scholarship code is financially feasible.

The bill written by Alex Castro, vice president of the SGC-MMC, was presented at a University wide meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 14, at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

It also includes sponsors Mish Feldman, senator of housing; James Harden, senator of business, and Giovane Castro, senator at-large.

At the meeting, Laura Farinas, president of the SGC-MMC, and Pablo Haspel, president of SGC-BBC, presented a new proposal which led to a motion to table a committee that would unite both scholarship proposals.

Haspel said that even if the bill passes through both senate sessions after being presented on Monday, it must be approved by the University Wide Scholarship Committee in order to move forward and that it is ideal for it to be approved on one of the last meetings that will take place on Nov. 27.

The University Wide Scholarships are planned to reward students for leadership, academics, serving in the military, being a parent, for having between 60 and 90 credits, for being an engineering and computing student, an international student or a resident on campus.

Scholarships will apply to both undergraduate and graduate students who meet the criteria to award the scholarships haven’t been finalized yet.

OPPA PANTHER STYLE!

Students from The International Student Club of FIU’s Biscayne Bay Campus danced to Oppa Gangnam Style, a popular song by South Korean rapper PSY. The dance was coordinated to kickoff the Panther Power Pep Rally at Panther Square for International Education Week.