Administrators answer to students at open forum

Danielle DePari  
STAFF WRITER

War dominated a forum with UCF administrators Monday as students drilled President John Hitt and his lieutenants about campus demonstrations and the university's financial investments in companies that profit-
ed from the Iraqi conflict.

Patrick Rostock, a member of Campus Peace Action, expressed the need for a campus with borderless speech zones.

"You need to make the campus entirely free for speech... Designated areas make demonstrations inaccessible," Rostock said.

Hitt said the problem of remote speech zones was resolved last year after the administration created three new regions on campus for free speech activity in addition to an existing area on the Chemistry Green, Hitt said.

The new zones include areas out-

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Paying tribute to the Creative queen

After 27 years of teaching the children of faculty and students, Dolores Burghard says goodbye

Nicole Jenkins  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Saturday, April 5, in an event featuring face painting and a clown, parents, children and alumni celebrated the career of Dolores Burghard, the founder of the Creative School for Children.

For the last 27 years, students and faculty have brought their young children to the Creative School, which Burghard, 73, founded. The on-campus school offers students and faculty a place to bring their children, ages 2 to 7, while they are in class or working.

Burghard has worked with children since she was 12, first as a camp counselor and baby sitter. She was in UCF's first graduating class when the school was known as Florida Institute of Technology and later earned her master's degree in early childhood education at UCF.

While Burghard worked in local government, she helped to found Head Start, a government program for low-income families in Orange County. In 1965, later, she directed a kindergarten program for Lakemont Elementary School for six years.

In 1970, the UCF Student Government Association asked Burghard to found the Creative School, a school dedicated to "the total development of young children," she said.

"I felt that there was a need," Burghard said.

Burghard worked full-time at the school for 27 years, closing just before she turned 73.

Burghard's last day was Saturday, and the school held a farewell celebration featuring face painting and a clown, parents, children and alumni.

Burghard said she will continue to work with young children to the day she retires.

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Students to meet with Hitt to save fired professor

Danielle DePari  
STAFF WRITER

Legal studies professor Diane Sudia surprised UCF last November when she decided to sue several professors and university officials after she was fired just before she would have earned tenure.

Students who adored the professor responded with an outcry of letters, T-shirt campaigns, public appearances and protests to convince UCF officials to reconsider.

Administrators and colleagues in the Criminal Justice and Legal Studies Department remained tight-lipped, unwilling to reveal why the professor was being let go after teaching at UCF for almost five years.

Seven months later, little has changed.

Sudia is still suing for what she calls an illegal termination procedure. University officials failed to give Sudia a full year's notice as they are required. And she is still unsure whether she'll have a job at UCF come fall semester. Students are still writing letters and protesting.

One thing has changed, though. Students' patience is beginning to wear thin and several are taking their case to the Trial Team to first place in a national competition this year; would have made tenure after this summer had she not received a notice of termination.

But like Sudia, students haven't had much luck persuading administrators and officials that those accomplishments should be enough to allow her to keep her job. In fact, they've had enough trouble getting Hitt to sit down and talk to them.

Hitt has canceled two previous appointments.
[goodbye books]

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Exposing fraud

The University of Central Florida's former legal counsel has turned the tables on his old employer, filing a $1 million wrongful-termination lawsuit against the private institution.

The lawyer, Michael A. Baskin, asserts that his dismissal from Clark Atlanta University in February was, in part, retaliation for his role in exposing financial wrongdoing at the historically black college.

The suit, filed in March, alleges that the institution allowed trustees and other prominent alumni to submit "false charitable donations" to the university in lieu of tuition payments for their children. The suit also alleged the alumni to claim tax-deductible contributions on their tax filings, the lawsuit says.

The trustees reluctantly abandoned the practice, Baskin's lawyer says, after he brought it to the attention of university officials. The practice was never reported to the U.S. Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service, the lawsuit says.

The suit also alleges that the chairman of Clark Atlanta's Board of Trustees, Carl Viace, awarded a housekeeping contract to a company that is owned by one of his friends, against the recommendation of an independent selection committee that had favored more qualified vendors.

In addition, Baskin says that Clark Atlanta's president, Walter D. Sondheim, had billed the institution for $14,000 in private legal work that he had performed but never billed before he took office last August.

The former general counsel says the president approved the reimbursement after being advised by Baskin that the fees should not be paid with university funds.

Clark Atlanta has disputed Baskin, claiming that his release of privileged information in his lawsuit amounts to professional malpractice and breach of fiduciary responsibility. The university also alleges that Baskin's legal action is part of an ongoing effort by him to libel, defame, and harm his former employer.

Baskin is seeking more than $1 million in forfeited salary and benefits that he says he was denied as part of the university's "wrongful termination." He had served as the university's general counsel for 16 years, and his annual salary was $173,000 at the time of his dismissal.

Baskin had also served as director of the office of the general counsel for eight years of one of several administrative roles he had held in addition to his regular duties. The institution, for example, owes him for $23,000 in uncollected bonus last year if he collected $1 million in past due-student accounts, his lawyer states.

Baskin says his attempt to collect the bonus and other compensation contributed to his dismissal.

Progress report

States should create a national database that allows institutions to be ranked against one another. The database would allow policymakers and administrators to identify and address problems that occur at new institutions to prevent them from developing.

To succeed, states must come up with a way to deal with federal privacy rules and to use students' Social Security numbers without violating those rules.

President John Hitt answers questions Monday during a forum between students and campus administrators.

War issues dictate forum discussions

"We have decided that a free speech campus isn't the direction to go for now," Hitt said. "It creates problems with pedestrian traffic and holding classes.

Other concerns regarding the war came from student Jonathan Lento, who wondered whether there were any moral implications for UCF, which has close ties to Lockheed Martin.

"Lookheed Martin has a $15 billion contract with the Department of Defense that does that mean anything to you?" Lento asked.

Hitt said it is not uncommon for shareholders to invest in defense in a time of international threat and conceded it was possible that UCF did own stock in Lockheed Martin.

Student Josh Edmundson complained to administrators about UCF Police officers' actions at last week's pro-troop rally. He claimed that after observing it during two opposing sides, he had to convince officers to intervene.

"I had to pull out the Golden Rule," Edmundson said.

Vice President William Merck defended the officers, stating they reacted appropriately in the situation, in times of protests, police action often excites the crowd and causes more violence, he said.

There were no arrests and no confrontations that led to anything worse than uniformed officers, there were four undercover officers in the crowd to maintain order at the event, he said.

Edmundson also questioned why police chose to stay away from the rally whose organizers had called them there for their protection.

"The police are there to keep order, not to protect individuals," Hitt said. "Their job was to protect the whole crowd. They are not a private sector security force.

Hospitality major Lisa Barcick's concerns were academic. Frustrated with the university's policy that limits students to 17 credit hours per semester, even during the summer sessions, she demanded to know how she could appeal the policy a second time because her first appeal was denied.

Administrators suggested that Barick work through the appeals process again and applauded her for her vigor in her academic career.

Provost Gary Whitehouse said the 17-hour restriction is especially necessary in the summer, because classes are fast-paced during the shorter term.

Junior Shaun Gyger hoped he could convince administrators to salvage an intramural field hockey team after he asked administrators to repair existing fields pitted with deep holes that posed hazards to students who played on them.

Vice President Tom Huddleston offered Gyger two options - except a promise that the administration might work with the Student Government Association and athletes to install lights on intramural fields.

Business major Bonnie Ebner echoed many students' sentiments when she asked administrators to solve registration dilemmas that she felt prevented many students from attending classes.

"I had to pull out the Golden Rule," Edmundson said.

"It's a form of prerinces," Huddleston said. "I in the department, which are the most comprehensive in the school. It is unfortunate students are affected."

Resident Assistant - Chris Yorn expressed concerns about the lack of housing extensions being offered to students living on campus. Those moving out have to vacate by April 29, although most cannot move into their new apartments until May 1. While many students are willing to pay an extra day's rent, the university has not provided many opportunities available as it has in the past, nor has it offered other living arrangements for students.

Huddleston said halls had to close for a day to clean and prepare them for new residents, but he assured students he would work to resolve the problem.

UCF selects new provost

Marshall Spence

Next steps, including expanding and focusing on the university's research mission. He also wants to see the university's efforts to attract honor students, improve curricular management services for students, and provide more career-oriented internship opportunities for students.

M.J. Soileau, UCF's vice president for research, served as chairman of the provost search committee, which was made up of
Spending riches on recognition?

Due to a production error, an incomplete version of this article was published in the April 14 edition. It is reprinted here in its entirety.

Mike Riegel
Staff Writer

How much does it cost to turn someone into a Golden Knight?

The answer is — well, there isn’t any answer. The money that UCF spends annually on public relation ventures could be donated for the university, but no one knows exactly what it accomplishes.

That fact, however, has done little to change the school’s opinion of the importance of public relations. Vice President of University Relations Dan Holsenbeck reports that UCF spends about $3 million on services that cover an array of public relations-related functions. Three different departments handle a majority of the public relations at UCF — community relations, marketing, and media relations. According to Linda Gray, director of media relations, the responsibilities of her branch transcend the standard goals of “name recognition” and “attracting new students.”

“We are a public university and we must be weighed against what we are, how we are, and how we have,” said Gray. The purpose for media relations, she said, is to attract positive attention to the university and provide a knowledgeable resource for students, parents, faculty and government representatives.

There are times, however, when the attention is not so positive. Stemming from her tenure as director of media relations at the University of Florida, Gray is aware that handling negative publicity is sometimes an integral part of her occupation.

“We have handled five serial murdors at UF [in 1996], there were hundreds of media on campus and dozens of remote satellite trucks for the broadcasts,” she said. While her staff here at UCF has not had to encounter a similar barrage of attention from the press, Gray said her office will field anywhere from 25 to 100 calls from media outlets on a normal day.

“Someone has to be available to answer those questions,” she said. UCF professor Hussam Alshar, recently arrested on charges of immigration fraud, was one of the first controversial incidents Gray has handled at UCF with reporters calling her office in search of the university’s official response.

Gray and her staff also make calls and send e-mails to alert media outlets about the achievements of UCF faculty and students.

“One of the reasons Benjamin decided to attend UCF was positive media attention was one of the reasons Benjamin decided to attend UCF,” she said.

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Media relations is a worthy endeavor for a university to invest in, Gray said, and UCF has a cost-efficient department.

“When I was at UFL I had a staff of 25 part-time employees and 14 part-time employees [in media relations],” she said. “Here, I’ve got four full-timers and two part-timers.”

Last year’s media relations budget at UCF was $387,500, less than what the three other major universities — UF, Florida State and University of Miami — spend on their media relations departments.

“I don’t think anyone can accuse UCF of spending too much on media relations,” Gray said.

But not everyone considers media relations department a priority in the education system.

Recently, the state’s education department announced an expenditure of $700,000 for its public relations department. This move has raised the eyebrows of critics and parents both in Broward County, where schools can’t afford summer courses, and in Palm Beach County, where teachers have resorted to buying their own classroom supplies due to a lack of funding.

“Allocations for public relations must be weighed against the context of informing the public about what UCF does,” said Rodie Webb, director of the UCF chapter of the United Faculty of Florida.

“UCF has raised the eyebrows of critics,” said Gray. “UCF is aware of its importance to the university and its massive expenditures.”

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UCF’s media relations department makes calls and sends e-mails to alert media outlets about the achievements of UCF faculty and students.

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Burghard credited with Creative School's success

FROM PAGE 1

Burghard to direct a new school on campus where students could drop off their children while they attended class. Burghard did not want to lead a traditional childcare program. “I was inspired to start a school, not a day care, where children are able to explore and become individuals,” she said.

In establishing the school, Burghard first had to decide on a philosophy and hire the right staff to foster that vision. The Creative School has a stable staff of individuals who have worked there for 12 to 22 years. Marcia Diebler, the assistant director and education supervisor of the Creative School, has worked there for 21 years.

Diebler says Burghard deserves credit for its success. “Mrs. Burghard’s dedication and philosophy has made the Creative School what it is today,” Diebler said.

From humble beginnings, the school has grown considerably. “The Creative School started out with 15 children; now we have expanded to about 115 per semester,” Burghard said.

The school’s success in developing motor learning skills has made it popular with UCF students and faculty, which explains the long waiting list to enroll children. “The children of students have first priority at the school,” Burghard said, “and comes faculty, alumni and the community.” Diebler said.

The school also provides graduate students and faculty with the opportunity to conduct educational research and training in the classroom.

At the Creative School, children learn to work independently and think on their own through stress-free programs in which they can choose their own activities. The philosophy of the school is not to mold the children, but for them to become individual learners.

“Imagination and creativity are the cornerstones for which we work to develop a child’s love for lifelong learning,” Burghard said. “The teachers here are facilitators, not lecturers.”

Burghard has always wanted primarily to make learning fun for the children. “I never thought that I would be working at the Creative School for so long, but I just love helping children grow,” Burghard said.

Christina Clingman, a member of the Parent Association, brings her 3-year-old son, Marcus, to the school. “All the parents will miss Burghard greatly; she cares a great deal for the children,” Clingman said.

A.J. Range, a supervisor at the school, said to see Burghard leave, “It will be difficult to replace such great leadership. The Creative School would not be where it is today if it were not for Burghard,” Range said.

Stacey Dunn, a professor of psychology at UCF, brings her 4-year-old daughter, Nicole, to the school while she is working. Dunn hopes the school will continue to grow. “I don’t think the Creative School for Children has been indispensable to the faculty and students of the university,” Dunn said.

Burghard has many avenues she wishes to explore after retirement. “She would like to do volunteer work with abused children, spend more time with her grandchildren and pursue her interests in photography and writing,” Dunn said.

Burghard will not be a stranger to the Creative School. She plans to visit the children whom she has grown fond of, as much as she can.
Seeing the light in the Tunnel of Oppression

Simulated horrors show students evils of real world

GENO MEBALIK contributing writer

It was the scariest extra-credit assignment freshman Mike Samson ever signed up for. Snare blared and video monitors warned Samson and Forum, in partnership with the Office of Testing, that something was going to happen at the message was getting to students.

“Terror in the Tunnel” was a full realization of world issues. As world citizens, we need to take responsibility for our actions and right these wrongs,” Ortiz said.

“The program brings about a sense of urgency,” Ortiz said. “It reminds students that these are world issues. As world citizens, we need to take responsibility for our actions and right these wrongs.”

The International Diversity Forum, in partnership with the Office of Student Activities and Housing, used an interactive display to create a world of emotions. Freshman Tamika Sims, 21, described the tunnel as honest.

“It’s scary,” she said. “It’s tough. It’s sickening. It’s horrible. It’s unbearable. It’s excessive. There are things that some people can’t relate to. Some are even desensitized to it, actually.”

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Byron Bledsoe, Senior Pastor
Harvard changes rules for early admission

Higher-education officials have long argued that full-time enrollment is misleading because they don’t track students who transfer to other institutions. Half of the students who earn bachelor’s degrees attend two or more institutions, and these students are sometimes referred to as “dropouts,” the report says. The report, “Following the Mobile Student: Can We Develop the Capacity for a Comprehensive Database to Assess Student Progression?” describes a study conducted by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems for the Lumina Foundation for Education. The study examined state-college enrollment record systems that track data at the student level and considered the feasibility of linking those databases into a more comprehensive network.

Forty-six such databases exist in 38 states, the report says — some states have multiple databases for different sectors, like community colleges. About half of the databases have links with other state databases, but they rarely link across state lines. The existing databases, which all use the same basic information categories, contain information on 80 percent of the nation’s full-time enrollment, the report says. The biggest roadblock in the plan, the report says, is, ironically, what all of the databases have in common: using Social Security numbers to track students.

Increasing concerns of privacy and identity theft in higher education are a “significant threat” to the proposal, researchers said. Colleges could encrypt the Social Security numbers or develop unique numbers specifically for linking student records across databases. The problem with that approach, researchers said, is getting administrators to agree on a common code.

Early action

For the second year in a row, Harvard University has changed the rules for its early-admissions program. Beginning this fall, the college will no longer allow applicants who apply early to Harvard to apply to any other college’s early-admissions program.

The shift comes after Harvard received a record number of early applications this year — 7,600 for roughly 1,350 slots, up from about 6,000 applications the year before.

William R. Fitzsimmons, Harvard’s dean of admissions and financial aid, said that the institution saw more students applying early to Harvard who were also applying early to several other colleges, and that his staff might not be able to keep up with the volume of early applications in the future.

Harvard’s admissions program is an “early decision” one, meaning that it is not binding. Students who apply under the program can get an early answer from Harvard, but they are not obligated to attend if accepted. Some colleges use binding early programs, known as “early decision,” in which students must attend if accepted. Still, other colleges offer both early-action and early-decision options.

Though Harvard’s policy change will make it easier on his staff, Mr. Fitzsimmons said the college’s primary concern is to help students.

Fitzsimmons and many other officials say the purpose of early-admissions programs is to help students who are sure about their college choice early in the process.

But Harvard is now in clear violation of national guidelines set by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, or NACAC.

Those guidelines state that students are free to make multiple early applications, as long as no more than one is a binding early-decision application.

At least two other colleges — Princeton and Brown Universities — also defy the association’s guidelines. They say they don’t want early applicants who have applied early decision to other early decision programs.

Harvard had changed its policy last year in an effort to comply with the admissions—counseling association’s guidelines, which had recently been updated. Under last year’s policy, Harvard allowed early-decision candidates to apply early decision to other early-decision colleges as well.

Provost will focus on increasing research

UCF students, staff and trustees. The committee’s job was to find three candidates to replace William Hitt. Hitt had to choose one of those three candidates.

The other two finalists were Gary S. Kruebchenkuhl, provost and senior vice president at Arizona State University, and Kathryn Seidel, dean of UCF’s College of Arts and Sciences. Seidel said she liked Hickey’s extensive administrative experience and that he performed admirably at the University of Akron. Seidel added that Hickey’s experience in fund raising was a bonus.

“It’s a big plus to have somebody who not only takes to go out and acquire funds,” Seidel said.

Graduate Student Association

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Hitt cancelled two previous appointments with students

FROM PAGE 1

with students backing Sudia in the past two months. They have scheduled another on April 23, though they're not sure what Hitt will reveal.

Hitt himself has said that when he meets with students, he won't be able to discuss much with them while litigation is pending between the university and Sudia.

"What students don't understand is that I can't talk about the case," Hitt said.

Hitt said he has yet to hear from a concerned student and is unaware of the campaigns students have launched to save the professor's job, besides a student appearance on a Channel 13 news broadcast.

However, Sudia backers say their two original appointments with Hitt were canceled after he appeared on Channel 13 inviting students to voice their concerns about Sudia.

They also say the Keep Diane campaign is so well known at UCF, Sudia's accomplishments and pointed out all the reasons the professor shouldn't be fired. While Sherman received a call from Yandi Cook, associate general counsel to Hitt, promising her that Hitt would respond to her letter, she received a response from Cook instead.

"It basically said, 'We don't care,'" Sherman said. "It wasn't from the president, it was from Ms. Cook. It had no commentary to what I wrote."

Students who are scheduled to meet with Hitt next week have compiled a petition containing 500 signatures — something they hope will help convince Hitt of Sudia's influence on campus.

Hitt acknowledged that he had not seen any other instance in UCF history where a terminated professor received so much student support.

In the meantime, Sudia has received a contract for the sum­mer until her case is heard in court.

Sudia declined to comment due to ongoing litigation.

Paleontologist Paul Sereno has encountered some of the weirdest creatures that ever walked the earth. Yet some of the scariest things he's discovered aren't likely to become extinct anytime soon. Sad to say, mutual fund management fees will probably outlast us all. That's why Dr. Sereno was afraid of getting eaten alive. So he turned to a company famous for keeping the costs down. That meant more money for him and less for the monsters.

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May Be Answer

The fall of Baghdad hasn’t tilted the dollar, but there is a small chance, but there is a small chance, that an economic situation may have been changed by the favor of the U.S. economies, marking a decade of first-half growth expectations, and chief executives re-examined the role of taxes, sales, investment, and hiring. But the pessimism appears to be heavily affected by the fall in economic activity that came in the runup to war. It will probably take months to know for sure if war jitters have been the economy’s main restraint, or whether more entrenched obstacles, such as the unwinding of the investment bubble that reached its peak in the 1990s, are to blame and will continue to hold back growth.

There are some signs that “proportional uncertainty” has been the main culprit, as Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan argued earlier this year. Consumer confidence has been in the wake of the drop in stock prices and the jump in stock prices that initially followed the outbreak of war March 19. But businesses are becoming more pessimistic. At the Business Roundtable, chairman of the council of the country’s largest companies, expecting to cut jobs this year two months ago. Exxon plans to increase them by 45% to 9%. Just 56% expect sales to grow. Down from 71% last November.

Cheap Air Fares

For Summer Go Fast

Bargains on overseas flights abound, but the deal might be fleeting. The outbreak of severe respiratory syndrome, on top of war for summer travel rebounds. The worry abounds, but there are signs it may dry up quickly as demand increase them by 45% to 9%. Just 56% expect sales to grow. Down from 71% last November.

And in a recent survey commissioned by Travelocity.com of 1,000 travelers, 57% said they intended to travel this summer, with 17% planing to vacation in Europe, up from 10% in December. If costs were to fall dramatically, 84% said they would travel.

From Supersonic

To Superseded

If price is no object, take one of the last flights of the Concorde. After 27 years of flying executive, stars and the late rich from New York to London and Paris at twice the speed of sound, the Concorde is being grounded. Air France will cease flights May 31 and British Airways will fly the supersonic jet, will stop all Concorde flights Oct. 31.

Concorde’s retirement means that aviation will for the first time in its history become slower rather than faster. There is no successor to the Concorde, and none is on the drawing board.

An aviation marvel, the needlebl.

INCENTIVES 101

A growing number of colleges have boosted their perks for students, hoping to attract the brightest kids during admission season this spring. Among the options:

School (location) 

Pace (New York City) 

Montclair State (New Jersey) 

American University (Washington, D.C.)

Columbia (New York City) 

Emory (Atlanta)

West Chester (Pennsylvania)

Northwestern (Evanston, Ill.)

Salem (New Hampshire)

DePaul (Chicago)

New Perks for Luring Students

Free Cellphones, Cable

Are Among Goodies For Luring Students

BY ELIZABETH BROOKS

With teenagers across the country choosing college this month, schools have a new reason to ratchet up the battle of the perks.

Colleges from Northwestern to Duke are offering free cellphones, free cable television and even specially baked birthday cakes. Emory University has started taking freshmen to Atlanta Braves games. "We want students to be happy," says First Katz, Emory’s assistant dean for campus life.

It’s a lot of pampering, of course, and not all elite colleges are doing this yet. But with the best students already being hounded with more助学金 breaks and fancy dorms, schools say they need more enticements. Even smarter: While the benefits are usually extended to all students, they’re relatively young. The freshmen have been campaigned by the National Association of College and University Business Officers. The problem now: What else to offer? For starters, Ohio State has turned some of its dorm rooms into a home of residential student housing.

Summer by the Sea

Harbor Beach, located in Port Huron, Michigan, is internationally known for its ship and submarine operations and research in marine science, biomedical marine research, aquaculture, and ocean engineering. The US Navy has an active presence in the area, and the Harbor Beach area is home to the Detroit River Lighthouse, the estuary with the highest diversity in the United States. The lagoon's proximity facilitates activities such as shipyard construction, shipbuilding, and boat tours, that provide students exposure to a variety of local and coastal habitats, including seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, salt marshes, intertidal mudflats, sandy beaches, nearshore communities, and nearshore environments.

Courses - Summer 2003

We courses are designed for undergraduate, masters and graduate students. Florida Atlantic University accepts these courses. Students wishing to undergraduate credits should register for courses at the 400 level; graduate students should register for courses at the 600 level. 

Summer A (May 12 - June 23)

BSC 4930/6936 - Global Change and the Marine Environment (3 credit lecture) - Overview of natural and anthropogenic global changes and their impact on marine organisms and marine ecosystems. 

Summer B (June 26 - August 8)

BSC 4930/6936 - Marine Biology and the Marine Environment (3 credit lecture) - Overview of marine organisms and interactions in their environment. 

For more details on Summer at the Sea, visit http://www.marinebiology.fau.edu/summer.html or call 561-297-3510.
Apple Plans Online Music Service

By PAUL WONG TAM and NANCY WISE

As WorldCom Computer Inc. will launch its own music service, it will be integrated with Apple's iTunes music software, is expected to focus on individual songs, charging consumers about 99 cents each for most songs.

WorldCom has secured backing from major recording companies, reaching a broader consensus than record labels.

A download music and chat with his unlimited Web-access to summer-friendly than record labels.
Opinions
Thursday, April 17, 2003

OU STANCE:

Hitt out of touch with student concerns

From his perch in the Office of the President on the top floor of Millikan Hall, John Hitt seems out of touch with the campus he directs. Rarely appearing on campus or interacting with students, Hitt has helped UCI to become one of Florida's largest and most-admired universities, but he has not grown similarly on students. Instead, students see their university's president as aloof to their concerns, ignoring them altogether or putting off action.

While Hitt has reached out to students more this year with open forums, he still has not paid enough attention directly to students. In particular, Hitt claims he did not know about the campaign being waged by students to save the job of legal studies associate professor Diane Sudia. Sudia, a campaign chronicled with news stories and editorials in the pages of this newspaper.

The university tried last fall to fire Sudia, whose unorthodox teaching style drew criticism from her peers and superiors. Yet that same teaching style earned Sudia the respect and admiration of her students.

Many of those students launched a highly visible campaign to "Keep Diane," complete with signs and T-shirts. They set up a table in front of the Student Union. They attracted the attention of the Student Government Association, as so much that the SGA Senate passed a resolution in support of Sudia. (The university itself has not officially commented on the Sudia situation because of pending litigation.)

Still, Hitt claims ignorance of the effort, and of the dozens of e-mails students have sent to him on Sudia's behalf. If Hitt followed the actions of the SGA Senate, the students in the student newspaper, he would have a better idea what is going on at his university.

Indeed, if he spent more time around the campus, interacting with students and listening to their concerns, Hitt would know that a number of students support Sudia.

While Hitt's once-a-semester forums with students represent an attempt to connect with them, he needs to make himself more available. Granted, Hitt has a challenging job, trying to appease a number of interested parties, but he should pay more attention to student concerns.

After all, students should be the ones he tries to please.

Hopefully, Hitt finally will meet with students who have scheduled a meeting to talk with him next week about Sudia. It would represent another step in the right direction.

OU STANCE:

Bush needs to focus attention on economy

With the Iraqi war for the most part behind him, President George W. Bush has finally decided to focus attention on the nation's ailing economy. Hoping to avoid the mistake of his father, who fought a successful war against Iraq but neglected the economy and ultimately lost his re-election bid, the current President Bush now says he sees the need to invigorate the economy.

He knows that he faces another election next year, and he cannot allow the economy to languish.

Unfortunately, Bush insists that giving massive tax cuts to businesses and on stock dividends is the best way to revitalize the economy. But most Americans currently disagree with this approach, according to an Associated Press poll that says six out of 10 Americans believe this is not the time for tax cuts. While Bush doesn't seem to mind giving tax breaks to the wealthy, he also doesn't seem to mind nudging young American troops, many of them poor and in need of financial assistance, into harry's war.

Tax cuts could help kick-start the economy, but Bush's first round of tax cuts two years ago did not do the trick. Things have not improved economically since then, and millions of jobs around the country have disappeared.

In his defense, Bush has faced some challenges that no one foresaw, namely the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent expenses required to vastly improve the nation's security.

Still, he seemed determined to go to war with Iraq, despite the $80 billion price tag.

Bush initially proposed a tax cut of $726 billion for this year's budget, but most Democrats and even some moderate Republicans rightly questioned slashing taxes at a time of rising deficits, an unknown Iraq war occupation and reconstruction costs. Both houses of Congress proposed tax cuts, but much less than Bush proposed.

On tax day, Bush decided he would accept a reduction of $55 billion, still far above the $25 billion backed by the Senate. This vote in the Republican-controlled Senate last week stung the president in a time of war.

As the economy sputters, Bush needs to work with Congress and try new techniques to get it going again. Bush needs to realize that tax cuts may work sometimes, but when they fail, he needs to try a different approach.

College students face a very shaky and uncertain job market as they graduate from college. They fear graduation and the prospect of finding a job in an economy where jobs seem to vanish, but few seem to appear. UCI's Career Resource Center says only 41 employers are currently registered for the May 8 Statewide Job Fair. The fair last year featured more than 100 employers.

The economy needs to improve, and Bush should think beyond tax cuts alone in an effort to make that happen.

"If you want a symbolic gesture, don't burn the flag; wash it."—AIMIRAC RICHMOND

Letters to the Editor

Were expressed here are not necessarily those of the Cattie Daily

SO FAR NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

That can only mean they must be in Syria

April 10, 2003

"So far no weapons of mass destruction...that can only mean they must be in Syria"

Dissent is patriotic

"Once again a Carol Beads award winner has demonstrated the intolerance that is likely pervading America.

By Marlon Guyer's letter to the editor, "Thomson guaranteed the right to be stupid," published April 11, has ventured into name-calling and attacking someone he does not agree with, rather than an attempt to better his position with critical thought and tact.

Free speech, for me at least, is a right established and protected by the Constitution. Apparently, the author feels only criticism for speech is protected, and anything with an opposing viewpoint should remain in silence, or suffer physically by being silenced.

This is precisely the sort of action practiced under Bush and Hitler. The history books will record the Constitution and Bill of Rights to prevent this sort of treatment from happening.

Unfortunately, it is the very attitude of the author that has led the majority in great part to something all Americans are currently professing as the actions of the administration regarding Iraq.

As much as the news media and the administration would like to believe, our nation is not simply putting their blind faith in the name of defending our freedoms for the author continues, but in the name of oil and Empire.

A true support of the position means bringing home our boys safely rather than advocating their deaths in an illegal invasion. The anti-war position demonstrates that. Unfortunately, I see no sign that Bush, or any political party supports the peace movement.

I support dearly my American nation, but it is the highest form of patriotism, only when we exercise our rights and liberties as Americans, that we begin to protect them from anything that is illegally unilateral."—SEVENTH AVENUE
Photographic images are not really reality.

GLENN McNATT
THE BALTIMORE SUN

The picture, which appeared in the Los Angeles Times, the Baltimore Sun and other newspapers seemed to depict a British soldier and Iraqi civilians during fighting in Basra, Iraq. Taken by a Los Angeles Times photographer, the image turned out to be a composite of two photographs that had been digitally spliced together.

When the deception was discovered, the Times published a correction, citing its policy against altering the contents of news photographs, and fired the photographer.

The incident was mainly seen and discussed as a matter of journalistic ethics. But it also highlighted what long has been recognized as photography's dual character. A photograph may look real but it is not reality. It is an image that, unlike other kinds of images, possesses the unique ability to compel belief in the truthfulness of what it represents.

Photography's ability to look real, even when it isn't, can be seen as its downfall. But, for artists, the same duality has been a great wellspring of creativity.

From Cindy Sherman's fake film stills to the fantastic photo collages of Marji Geerlink's and Anthony Cocolios, one of the persistent themes of contemporary art photography has been an insistence on the absolute unreliability of photographs as measures of truth.

Indeed, much contemporary art photography deliberately sets out to convince viewers of the falsity of the faith in photography's capacity to capture reality. Early practitioners, for example, the Venetian painter Paolo Veronese, was hired before the Inquisition on charges of heresy arising from his painting of the Last Supper, which was never made.

Yet so convincing was the illusion that many people insisted that they actually remembered having seen the "movies" from which Sherman's "stills" were taken—even though the whole thrust of her work practically ended out to the viewer: "This photograph is a lie!"

Since then, art photography has moved further and further from the idea that photographs are "true." At the same time, photojournalism as a way of understanding the world has moved further and further from the idea that photographs are "true." Yet so convincing is the illusion that many people insist that they actually remember having seen the "movies" from which Sherman's "stills" were taken—even though the whole thrust of her work practically ended out to the viewer: "This photograph is a lie!"

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407-382-9626
Sweep of Dolphins gives the Knights Atlantic Sun lead

Jania Shinkate hit her 12th double of the season in the second game of Sunday's doubleheader against Jacksonville.

Softball team has won eight conference games in a row

ASHLEY BURNS
STAFF WRITER

The UCF women's softball team didn't seem to be challenged at all this past Sunday as the Knights easily took two games from the Dolphins of Jacksonville University. A stunning combination of near-perfect pitching and fast basing helped the Knights improve their record to 32-25 overall. The sweep also moved the Knights into the top spot in the Atlantic Sun Conference with an 11-3 league record.

The Knights won the first game 4-0 as senior Dottie Cupp pitched yet another one-hitter, giving her a 16-5 overall record. Cupp struck out seven Dolphins and walked only one.

The Knights gave Cupp the only offense she would need in the third inning. Right fielder Rachellie Schmidt reached on an error in the bottom of the inning and advanced to second on a Jen Whitley ground out. Stephanie Best walked and then pinch runner Meghan Brown scored.

THE STAFF

SEE Sawyer on 16

Competition tight for Atlantic Sun track title

JON SROGGINS
STAFF WRITER

The injury bug hit the UCF women's track team hard this indoor season, but Coach Marcia Mansur-Wentworth's squad never lowered its expectations.

The team's goals are still within reach as the Golden Knights prepare to host the Atlantic Sun Conference Championship meet this weekend at the UCF track and field complex.

Last season UCF earned its third consecutive conference title by keeping the field, tallying 121 points, an Atlantic Sun all-time best. This year the field is much more even. Mansur-Wentworth said 200 points might be enough to win, and there would certainly not be another runaway.

"Nobody has that many good people. It will be a much more open tournament," Mansur-Wentworth said. "FAU looks strong. Their athletes are competing really well. On paper they're definitely the team to beat.

The Knights have their work cut out for them. They have won five conference championships, including the last three in a row, but Mansur-Wentworth said the doubles other teams will be intimidated.

"If anything, that's a weakness," she said. "Everybody wants to knock us off. They're all gunning for us. They probably feel like this is their year. We're down, they can get us. I know if I was at

SEE Knights on 15

SETTING THE TONE

ASHLEY BURNS
STAFF WRITER

There is something special about a pitcher who can throw a one-hit, complete-game shutout. When Golden Knights' ace Dottie Cupp walked off the mound this past Sunday, it was just another day at the office. Most pitchers, baseball and softball, would grab for simply a win, but alone a one-hitter. For Cupp, though, the scoreless innings just roll off of her fingers.

What makes this senior pitcher so special isn't the fact that she has a cannon for an arm or that she can baffle any batter and turn around an adversary. Instead she chose to.

"There's always the pressure to win. It's a brand new program, so UCF took a chance on us last year," Cupp said. "We had something to prove."

Cupp did more than prove the worthiness of this squad. In her first season, and assuming the role of a junior, she earned a spectacular record of 26-6, while fanning 213 batters on the season. Her bat also provided support to her own cause as she bat-
Two words into a post-game interview, UCF Coach Jay Bergman perfectly summarized his team’s 10-4 victory at Jay Bergman Field on Tuesday night over state rival University of South Florida (4-3). "Matt Fox," Bergman said. Indeed Fox (4-3) was the story on a beautiful night for a ball game, a contest that concluded a three-game series between the two schools that took place over the past three Tuesdays. USF had won the first two in Tampa rather handily, knocking Fox around for three runs and six hits in 4 2/3 innings over both games. That served as a microcosm for the sophomore’s season, as the sometimes shortstop, sometimes pitcher had seemed to struggle all the time in a year that began with much promise.

But this time, his third start of the season, Fox would show the great talent that spurred on those expectations and convince the Arizona Diamondbacks to draft him coming out of high school. He went a career-long 6 2/3 innings and recorded a career-high 11 strikeouts on route to the first win of his collegiate career. "It feels real good," Fox said. "Tonight I just felt under control. I had all my stuff, I was able to throw strikes where I wanted and I was able to get my overthrow over for a strike. I should do that every night." Almost from the beginning, it appeared that things would go the Golden Knights’ way. After Jeff Baisley got a one-out single for the Bulls in the top of the first, he attempted to steal second with Myron Leslie at the plate. The ball got away from catcher Drew Butler for a moment, but he recovered to peg Baisley at second. USF Coach Eddie Carrabri came out to argue that the ball hit Leslie, but to no avail. That play proved pivotal, as Leslie followed with a double that would have easily scored Baisley from second. Fox worked out of trouble by getting the next batter to ground out to the second baseman.

The Knights got on the board in the bottom of the first, with Ryan Bear knocking in Nathan Leslie, followed by a triple from Bob Myron-Leslie at the plate. The ball had all my stuff, I was able to get my overthrow over for a strike. I should do that every night." Almost from the beginning, it appeared that things would go the Golden Knights’ way. After Jeff Baisley got a one-out single for the Bulls in the top of the first, he attempted to steal second with Myron Leslie at the plate. The ball got away from catcher Drew Butler for a moment, but he recovered to peg Baisley at second. USF Coach Eddie Carrabri came out to argue that the ball hit Leslie, but to no avail. That play proved pivotal, as Leslie followed with a double that would have easily scored Baisley from second. Fox worked out of trouble by getting the next batter to ground out to the second baseman.

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Knights have edge in distance, field events

FROM PAGE 14

one of our rival schools, that’s what I’d be telling my girls. We’re not going to let them beat us again."

If her team is to win, Mansur-Wentworth knows where to expect good finishes. "We should be strong in the high jump, the long-distance stuff and the throws. Those are the places where we can put a gap between us and FAU," Mansur-Wentworth said. She said they would try to outscore FAU in the distance and field events and then hold on for the win. Mansur-Wentworth also said she expects outstanding performances from two seniors, Erica Garcia and Kelly Roloff. "I know Kelly and Erica, they’ve won three straight, certainly don’t want to lose their senior year," Mansur-Wentworth said. "We need Erica Garcia to repeat what she did last year in the 300, then we’re hoping she can do some other things in the 200." Roloff will again compete in a multitude of events: high jump, long jump, triple jump and two relays.

"She’s a big utility runner," Mansur-Wentworth said. "We can count on her to compete, even when she’s tired." A new addition to this year’s conference championship meet will be the 3000-meter steeplechase; an event in which freshman Andrew Morrow has excelled all season. Andrew Smith of DeSoto State is the conference’s fastest athlete in the event, but Mansur-Wentworth said Morrow would give Smith a run for her money.

"He’d like to win. The girl in front of her [has been] fastest by about 15 seconds, and that’s a lot to make up, but I know she’d like to win and she’ll compete hard," Mansur-Wentworth said.

The championship meet begins today and concludes Friday.
Cupp is lone senior on young team

FROM PAGE 14

led 257 on the season with six home runs and 10 doubles. Cupp and center fielder Janice Shishimori were given the honor of being the first Knights in the history of the program to be named to the All-Region team.

Most critics and skeptics would expect that a repeat performance of the phenomenal inaugural season would be tough to deliver, especially after having an arthroscopy on her pitching shoulder. With the addition of nationally ranked teams like UCF Florida and Florida State, the Knights, as well as Cupp, looked due for a sophomore slump.

Cupp, however, felt no concern.

"I like the level of competition really increased this year," she said. "I think that's really good for our program, because without that you can't grow and develop.

Cupp's biggest challenge for this season wasn't coming off of surgery, but having to deal with being the only senior on the squad. Once again, she really showed no concern.

"I have more experience at the collegiate level and I've got more to share with my fellow teammates," Cupp said. "I kind of have to be the leader on the field, and I try not to let things get to me."

For the most part of the 2003 season, Cupp hasn't let anything get to her. Cupp's record of 15-9 is misleading. Five of her nine losses were within two runs. Yet looking into those wins, the Knights' lucky hurler has pitched two 5-hitters, a two-hitter, two 1-hitters and a no hitter at Belmont. If those games aren't impressive enough, she managed to no-hit No. 17 FSU's batters for six innings. Cupp has a 1.70 ERA this season and leads the A-Sun with 156 strikeouts.

Cupp's modesty on the issue is evident, but her numbers supersede her words. Oh her tendency to be near perfect the stuff her team is predicted. "It always feels good when I'm throwing well. I started the year a little slow. I haven't felt anymore pressure. I was just pumped up and ready to go."

Being the only senior on the team does apply one pressure that Cupp cannot escape. Once this season is over, she will have to leave her teammates. With a 12-5 conference record and three more conference series to go, the Knights are facing a great opportunity to make it into the A-Sun Tournament. Regardless of how this season pans out, Cupp has given her all to the new program, and that all is more than enough, Cupp feels very optimistic about where the team will go after she leaves.

"I think that we've done well," she said. "One thing that we're looking to bring to this conference is consistency. We have other leaders on the team and they have stepped up."

Cupp's confidence is high for women's collegiate softball in general.

"Right now softball is really growing throughout the United States," she said. "They're bringing back the women's professional league next year. With that, more people are going to pick up the sport. It's going to become more mainstream. Three years ago they didn't show any NCAA tournament games, they only showed the Finals. Now they're showing the whole tournament."

"I think that if Cupp with the added facilities, when they put the lights in, will only help the program and more people are going to want to come and play."

Sawyer continues A-Sun dominance

FROM PAGE 14

Junior Taylor Sawyer threw her own masterpiece in the second game, which the Knights won 6-1. Sawyer gave up only four hits in the late afternoon while striking out five. The Dolphins, Lindy Oakley provided all of the early offensive entertainment for the Knights when she crushed a line drive double to left center, scoring Cupp and Lindsey Bush. Oakley advanced to third on an illegal pitch by Jacksonville pitcher Kaitie Dobson, and then scored on a wild pitch by Dobson.

The Dolphins fought back and cut into the Knights' lead when Janine Palombo barely beat out a double play throw by Best, scoring Linda Campo. Campo, however, had reached on an error, making the run unearned for Sawyer.

The Knights flexed back in the bottom of the fourth, when center fielder Janice Shishimori drilled a long double off the right center fence. Green joined her on the bases with a bunt base hit. Bush followed with a deep single to left, scoring Shishimori. Oakley loaded the bases with a single to left, and Clark hit a bloop single to center, scoring Green. Schmidt brought Bush home with a single to right, giving the Knights a 6-1 lead.

Sawyer was able to retire the Dolphins in the sixth and seventh to pick up the complete game and build her record to 14-10 on the season.

Sawyer, pleased with the run support that her teammates gave her, said, "We're hitting very well right now, so it makes it easier to get out there and pitch. You don't have to worry about one- or two-run support."

The Knights continue their assault on the A-Sun with a doubleheader at Troy State on Friday before heading to Mercer for two games Saturday.
Cupp is undecided about post-UCF softball career

**FROM PAGE 16**

Cupp is undecided about post-UCF softball career

To come, especially if you're winning and you have the newest, state-of-the-art facilities.

The sky's the limit for the UCF softball team, but the question of Cupp's softball life after UCF remains.

"I don't know yet. There may be a little bit of international ball after my sophomore year in college and that was fun. I'd like to do that again," Cupp said. "If it isn't there, it's not the end of the world. I might like to coach at some point, but I haven't really made up my mind yet."

While Cupp remains undecided about her future in the sport that she has devoted her college life to, her past and present remain. Cupp has been a winning pitcher not only for the softball team, but to UCF sports as a whole.

Star players like Danni Culpapper and Michelle Atwood are on the horizon, and it will be interesting to see how Cupp's presence on the field will continue to influence the sport.

Lightweight boat finishes 4th

**Jon Kutilek Staff Writer**

The UCF women's rowing team returned home last weekend after competing in the 2015 EARC Championship, which was held in Cherry Hill, N.J.

The Knights only had two boats, but they competed with the best in the country and earned a 4th place finish in the varsity 8+. The lightweight 8+ boat, which is made up of only female rowers, also finished 4th. The lightweight 8+ boat, which is made up of only female rowers, also finished 4th.

The Knights are looking forward to their next competition, which will be held in Sarasota, Fla., in early April.

The lightweight 8+ boat, which is made up of only female rowers, also finished 4th. The lightweight 8+ boat, which is made up of only female rowers, also finished 4th.
A-Sun softball standings

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A-Sun baseball standings

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Atlantic Sun Men's Tennis Championship schedule

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<td>M10: Match 7 winner vs. Match 8 winner</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>M11: Match 9 winner vs. Match 10 winner</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
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Atlantic Sun Women's Tennis Championship schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>M5: Campbell vs. JSU/Belmont</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
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<td>M6: TSU vs. Gardner-Webb</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
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<td>M7: UCF vs. Samford</td>
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<td>M8: FAU vs. Mercer</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>M9: Match 5 winner vs. Match 6 winner</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
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<td>M10: Match 7 winner vs. Match 8 winner</td>
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- 9 AM
- Stetson vs. Belmont/Samford
- UCF vs. JSU/Mercer

Round of 32 - Friday, August 8th
- 9 AM
- Campbell vs. JSU/Belmont
- Gardner-Webb vs. Samford

Round of 16 - Saturday, August 9th
- 9 AM
- Match 5 winner vs. Match 6 winner
- Match 7 winner vs. Match 8 winner

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Friends are always telling her to relax, said junior Cara MacMartin. As a nursing major, her life is full of stress from class and tests.

"As soon as I am told about a test, I begin to worry about it all the way up until I take it, which could be weeks," the 21-year-old said.

"In hopes of alleviating anxiety, MacMartin is one of many UCF students who participate in guided meditation," she said.

Guided meditation is the practice of uncertainly attempting to focus your attention on one thing at a time, said Morgan Harman, 22, a graduate student and instructor at the Recreation and Wellness Center.

What you choose to focus on is entirely up to you, but the goal is relaxation and clarity of mind, she said. By focusing on a particular object or thought while ignoring everything else, you increase your ability to focus on the present.

To teach students about relaxation, Harman has lead many meditation classes for students in the Recreation and Wellness Center.

"The meditation classes I conducted throughout this semester came out of the work I do at the Wellness Center with biofeedback therapy," she said.

"Biofeedback therapy, I use a computer to monitor internal functions of the body like heart rate, skin temperature, muscle tension and breathing," Harman said.

Harman combines different relaxation techniques to teach students about breath and to slow down the body.

"Most often, what you choose to focus on is entirely up to you," she said. 

Grades also affect whether freshmen are satisfied with their college experience, Harman said. "One of the complaints we are hearing most frequently is from freshmen that feel depressed because they are doing poorly in school," Harman said.

For James Pittman, 19, can relate. He is a senior class this semester that he failed in the fall.

"I've learned some hard lessons this year," he said. I walked my best out in my calculus class and I still received an F for the course. That kind of thing never happened to me in high school. I've never put so much effort into a class and not gotten the final grade I desired as a result.

Although Pittman said his parents are disappointed when he doesn't receive his usual report card, and if they try to not put too much pressure on him academically.

"I'm not the last benefit of your freshman year," he said. "You really have to manage your time well. Your parents aren't there to make sure you get up to go to school anymore."
Academic and emotional preparation are key to a successful first year

Freshmen Brett Johnston and Trevor Bowles think about how college has changed them.

"I pay for my education, car insurance, gas, medical insurance and everything else either through scholarships or out of my pocket," the 19-year-old said.

She currently is looking for a job to help support herself during her two years years. According to the American Council on Education and UCLA's "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2002," 40 percent of men and 25.3 percent of women said that chances are very good they will get a job to help pay for college.

"As money becomes an issue for many freshmen, some are beginning to spend more cautiously," the study found that 65.3 percent of freshmen are concerned about financing college.

"This year, I've learned how to find the best prices when I go grocery shopping. Now, I sometimes buy generic food brands instead of automatically picking up the name-brand stuff," Johnston said. "That's something I've never thought about before college."

"First-year students are not only learning how to cook and shop for themselves, but also are making decisions about things previously dictated by parents.

"Freshmen who no longer live with their parents are experiencing a whole new lifestyle," Harman said. "They can come home whenever they want. They can go to bed at 3 a.m. when they have a class at 8 a.m. and no one is there to tell them they can't.

Jeffers likes the newfound freedom of deciding whether to wake up to go to class or sleep all day.

Now that students are treated as adults for the first time, they are expected to act accordingly by parents and teachers.

"My mom told me that when I turned 18, I couldn't come running to her with every problem I'm faced with," Jenkins said. "If I have a problem with a teacher or a class, I'll tell her about it, but I have to handle it on my own.

Jenkins' mother also told her she would be there to support and guide her daughter when necessary.

"Harman says it is important for freshmen to have a good relationship with their parents because it helps them adjust to the challenges they face in college.

"We hear a lot of complaints of homesickness from students during their first semester of college," he said. "I know students who call their parents six to seven times a day and are between each of their classes."

Jeffers drives two hours to visit his family about every two months. He said that he is very close with his parents and keeps in contact with them through e-mails and frequent telephone calls.

Proper academic and emotional preparation is also a crucial part of a successful transition into college life, according to Harman.

Of the 282,549 freshmen surveyed in the national study, 25.0 percent were enrolled in two or three Advanced Placement courses during high school, which count for college credits if students pass an exam.

AP classes are designed to help students get a head start in obtaining college credits during high school. AP classes also prepare students for the difficult coursework they probably will receive at a university.

"Studying in college is very time-consuming, but, generally, most of the classes I'm taking aren't much harder than what I took in high school," Pittman said. "Teachers overprepare us in high school to try and scare us. College hasn't been as hard as my high school teachers said it would be."

Freshman Brian Barrett, 18, disagreed. He said the classes in college are much more difficult than he had expected, particularly his biology course.

"I have to study at least 14 hours a week to do well in college, whereas in high school, I only studied about five hours a week," he said.

Besides being successful academically, retaining childhood values and religious beliefs also present a challenge to first-year students out on their own.

"Jenkins' mother never forced a particular religion upon her while growing up, it has always been her choice.

"She introduced me to religion and let me take it however I wanted to," she said. "Because she didn't force it on me, I'm just as spiritual now as I ever was."

The ability to decide whether to continue attending church in college has also strengthened Jeffers' beliefs.

"It might be hard for some people to stick with their morals when they first come to college. They think, 'Now that I'm out of my parent's house, I can do whatever I want and be whoever I want to be,'" he said. "That temptation hasn't made me depart from my beliefs, though. It's actually made me grow stronger in my decision to go to church, since now I know it's completely up to me."

Freshmen say that being given the decision to decide which college to attend also strengthens their convictions to succeed academically and socially.

Coming to Orlando was a decision Jeffers made on his own. He was accepted into the University of North Florida and Ohio State University, but chose UCF for its location, affordable cost and good weather.

"Jeffers chose UCF because of its low tuition and recognized educational programs. Since the beginning of her freshman year, Jenkins said she has gained knowledge both in and outside of the classroom.

"Said Jenkins: "These two semesters have been a challenge socially and emotionally. I'm learning that regardless of what may stop me temporarily, I am the only one who can stop me permanently."

FROM PAGE 19

Barrett, right, with the first-year advising office right before finals.
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Drinking around the world — how naughty ... how fun.

I am referring, of course, to Orlando’s hidden attraction: the local underground tourist practice of attempting to down one drink at all 11 countries at Disney’s Epcot World Showcase in a single afternoon — without poking.

When I was 19 and working for Disney in 2006, I set a personal goal to somehow stumble drunkenly out of Epcot’s gates, knowing I had completed the ultimate beverage mission.

The unfilled vow resurfaced a couple of weeks ago as I eagerly signed up to attend Epcot last Sunday with a group of 15 foreign exchange students. I couldn’t imagine a more perfect opportunity to gain some worldly perspective — and a supreme buzz — than with my international friends.

Unfortunately, I also couldn’t have imagined the lechery and consequences of drinking downtown the night before. I slept through my alarm, missed the 10 a.m. Epcot pick-up and drove hurriedly to the theme park myself around noon, slogging in the hot sun as I attempted not to wallow in the depths of my hangover.

I met up with my friends as they were finishing their lunch. We all agreed to begin our mission in Mexico, working our way around the World Showcase lagoon in clockwise fashion.

We walked into the picturesque Mexican pavilion and admired the colorful Mexican sculptures in the marketplace. We laughed helplessly at the outlandish, Cheech-like mustaches adorning the male puppets’ faces on the boat ride, and finally ordered $7 layered margaritas from the open-air beverage stand outside.

Senior Joanne Guzman, 21, was the first to notice the drinks’ shortcomings. “Um, the only red layer is good,” she said, wrinkling her nose.

Guzman was right. The drinks certainly couldn’t compare to the real Mexican margaritas from my Spring Break ventures to Cancun. We attempted to slump down the rest of our drinks as we moved on to Norway.

Since my mom is from Sweden, I knew that the Scandinavian vibe of Norway would remind my four Swedish friends of their homeland. Sure enough, I watched as they consumed delightedly over the Holly Hanson ski wear and “inner bliss” chocolate candies in the gift store.

“They have lingonberries here,” junior Daniel Lambert exclaimed. “Why didn’t you tell us?”

In broken Swedish, I attempted to ask the Norwegian waiter if they sold my favorite, wickedly delicious Scandinavian beverage — pear or strawberry cider.

“Hur sko!” Interpreted, “Poron? Jordgubbar?”

The waiter stared at me blankly. “Are you speaking Swedish or Norwegian?” he finally asked in English.

OK, no maybe my accent needed a little work. Luckily, junior Ida Karlsson, 22, jumped in and fired the question in rapid Swedish, only to receive a regretful “No.”

“Omm,” I thought, “we/should have worked up the same excitement for a Viking-sized Hagens beer.”

We rode the cheap Norwegian ride and watched a stereotypical touring movie about Scandinavia.

“I think a lot of Americans go to Epcot and see everyone in their traditional costumes and think ‘OK, I’ve seen the world, now I don’t have to travel’,” Lambert, 22, said.

Senior Mikaela Nilsson, 24, also Swedish, maintained a slightly different perspective.

“I just think Scandinavian guys look hot in costumes,” she joked airily, eyesing the waiters’ campy outfits.

We decided to keep walking to China, even though only about half of our crew bought drinks in Norway. However, realizing that I would probably crash if I drank any more alcohol, I decided to let our original goal of drinking at every country slide. Instead, we chose to go to China, especially since $7 per drink, per country was way more money than I was willing to spend.

In China, some of our group members felt compelled to create their own paper masks on sticks, which was the official “middle project” set up at little tables for the under-21 crowd.

“Hey, you can use these masks next time you decide to go streaking across campus,” a middle-aged, male stranger suggested, wiggling his eyebrows excessively.

I was suddenly very glad that we hadn’t drunk ... or perhaps the man’s comment was a sign that I should keep drinking. I leaned over and took a sip of my friend’s Tsing Tao (the Chinese version’s singlenature drink) and we fled to Germany.

The hot sun was starting to take its toll. We collapsed exhaustedly on a bench inside the German restaurant, our eyes glassy and our stomachs humming at the sight of the artery-clogging sausage buffet. A few of our guys purchased Beck’s Dark beers (gross) from the staff — all dressed in biedermeier — and we trudged on to Italy.

“Hey, don’t they have good wine-tasting here?” Junior Anuj Patel asked, as we walked into an Italian wine shop, hoping for a free drop of alcohol.

The Italian wine merchant beamed. “Only nine dollars each,” he said in a thick accent.

“But we’re drinking around the world,” Patel, 21, protested.

“Then try the Peroni beer stand,” the merchant replied impatiently, shooing us out the door.

Unfortunately, the beer stand was blocked by a weird, slightly different perspective.

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Eternal Knights remembered

Last week, UCF honored students, faculty and staff who have died during the past year. From left, a white rose was set out for each Eternal Knight; students sang 'Amazing Grace,' and memorial awards were given to family members.

Visualizing situations relaxes, relieves stress

FROM PAGE 19

flight response," Helsper said. "Meditation teaches people how to deal with their stress in a productive and healthy manner, that will leave them equipped to handle their everyday stress problems in a relaxing manner." In guided meditation, instructors often help students visualize locations and calming environments.

MacMartin remembers when she first tried guided meditation in a high-school sociology class. "The teacher read us a scenario that led us through a walk in the forest, eventually ending up at the beach," she said. "It was very relaxing." For most students, the great difficulty of meditation lies in the idea of focusing on single objects and blocking out the present situation. The trick is not to let first attempts discourage future meditation, said junior Kasey Kees, 21. Eventually it becomes easier to meditate as the body becomes accustomed to the mental exercise.

"Some people count to three in time with their breathing, while other people focus on a word, like ohm, for instance," Kees said. "I focus my attention on the pattern of my breathing. I find it simplest to internalize my meditation in that way." Along with relieving stress, meditation is useful in other ways. "I find that in place of sleep, meditation is a great alternative," Kees said. Meditation can often supplement Western medicine. If done properly, Helsper said that these relaxation techniques are effective in treating many common illnesses.

"People with migraines, muscle tension, sleep problems, chronic pain from car accidents, lock jaw, digestive disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome or general anxiety find meditation helpful and calming," she said. Helsper wishes to increase the number of meditation classes scheduled to two seminars every other week.

"Meditation teaches people how to deal with their stress in a productive and healthy manner that will leave them equipped to handle their everyday stress problems."

—MORGAN HELSPER

Guided meditation instructor

"I'm laid back about the class schedule; it really depends on the students," she said. "I like to allow them the freedom to choose when the best time for them is to come in, and then we all decide together based on everyone's schedule." For further information on guided meditation, contact the Recreation and Wellness Center at 407-823-2408.

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Traveling under influence leaves guests drained

FROM PAGE 22

mime-like performance artist, wearing a white mask and a velvet royally cape. That was fine; we were sick of beer, anyway.

"OK, Italy ... weird people with masks," noted junior Sharon Pare, 21. "Let's move on."

So we kept walking, passing the American pavilion's greasy, turkey leg-gnawing tourists and famed cake stands. We knew better than to pay Epcot prices for a Bud Light.

In Japan, we gawked over an impressive Koi fishpond and bought three mini-boxes of Botan Rice Candy; I promptly passed out to the IIJOUth.

Already feeling drained, we all mixed the idea of buying a Kirin Ichiban beer in Japan and continued on to Morocco. A cranky Aladdin and Jasmine were posed for pictures inside the Moroccan pavilion.

"Come on, people, one at a time," Aladdin snapped through gritted teeth. "We don't have all day!"

I decided against buying my companions, or myself, a Casablanca beer. On that note, we tramped off to our last three destinations: France, the United Kingdom and Canada.

In France, I ordered a glass of wine and sat down on the edge of a fountain, where it started raining with a young couple from Miami about the "drinking around the world" craze.

"Three years ago, my friends and I came here and did it," said Javier Suarez, 31, a lighting consultant. "We had to pay at every single stop, and we were really feeling it by Morocco. Only two of us made it the whole way; the others were too drunk to order any more ... and a couple of the guys threw up right into Lake Epcot."

His wife, youth counselor Anna Suarez, 26, sheepishly told her story. "I tried it on New Year's four years ago," she said, laughing. "I was too drunk to make it past the second country ... but it was definitely a fun way of experiencing Epcot."

Deedily "traveling" out, our international group didn't even stop at the U.K. or Canada. Instead, we rode the burching General Motors Test Track ride, paid $20 each for an authentic Norwegian buffet at the Norwegian pavilion and watched the spectacular fireworks display at 9 p.m.

As we passed by a couple of obvious round-the-worlders dozing on a park bench on the way out, I asked my friends if they wished we had attempted the true, one-drink-per-country world challenge.

"No, because there weren't really any fun, drunk activities to do," Lambert pointed out. "But it would be fun for a bachelor party or something."

Anyone getting married? Watch out, Epcot; my mis-tries will have all accomplished.

Consultant, "We had just been up to the stage and continued on."

Traveling under influence leaves guests drained.
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