

Change is a consistent theme for the CVA

The Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention works with hundreds of victims each year, but over time it has also faced a number of challenges including understaffing, restructures and the perception of a lack of support from administration.

Jesse Stokes
CORRESPONDENT

The Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention (CVA) has been a place for students and USF community members to turn to in some of their most desperate times of need since its origins in 1992.

According to its website, "The Center for Victim Advocacy provides free and confidential services to USF students, faculty, and staff. We serve men, women, and people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expression who have experienced crime, violence or abuse on or off campus either

recently or in the past."

But over the past few years, the CVA has turned into an environment where it is easy for caseloads to pile up, understaffing acts as a major stressor and internal unrest ensues, a former employee said.

The former employee, who prefers to remain anonymous, said that during their time working at the CVA, there were between two and three advocates and both the director and assistant director took on smaller caseloads as needed.

Even then, the norm was for each advocate to have a caseload of approximately 40. But that is ten cases higher than

the industry standard.

This is something that current members of the administration say they are working to combat.

"When we were fully staffed at three full-time advocates, an assistant director, director and staff assistant, it was still a little bit stretched thin given what we were doing and how much we were doing," the former employee said. "Over the years a lot of those roles and positions were merged or taken away completely — or people who were hired were not necessarily experienced, so they require a lot of training — that is definitely of concern

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The Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention has endured a multitude of challenges and changes in leadership.

ORACLE FILE PHOTO

Kashmir conflict advances onto campus



Leda Alvim

MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

Amid conflict in the Indian region of Kashmir, Student Government (SG) senators, sponsors and fellow students drafted a resolution calling for

action after the government of India revoked Kashmir's special status as an autonomous state.

The resolution, however, was opposed by students from India, claiming that it only represented one side of the conflict.

According to Relations Committee Chair Alliyah Edwards, the purpose of senate resolutions are for legislators to highlight or condemn actions that may be affecting their constituents at USF and beyond. Through the drafting of resolutions, students can make

a call for action on behalf of SG and the student body.

The resolution was written by Sen. Noor Kantar alongside nine sponsors, with the intent to "condemn the actions and atrocities committed by the government of India against the valley of Kashmir," said Khubaib Farooq, one of the sponsors. It was then presented to the SG Senate Relations Committee on Sept. 19, where it was later sent for mediation after students claimed bias on its content and language used.

Kantar was not available for comment by the time of publication Wednesday night.

Kashmir is located in the Himalayan region, with borders in Pakistan, China and India. The region has been the focus of conflict between Pakistan and India since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

The conflict evolved Aug. 5, when the Indian government decided to revoke article 370 and 35-A from India's constitution.

The article gave Kashmir its autonomy, including its own constitution, a separate flag and the freedom to make laws.

With the removal of article 370, the Indian government imposed restrictions in their region of Kashmir that shut down schools and colleges, suspended telephone and internet service and ordered house arrest of regional political leaders as well as civil servants, according to the BBC.

Sen. Suyog' Thengale said he

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COUNSELING

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In this training, participants will learn to observe warning signs using strategies like O.A.R.S (open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening and summarizing). The purpose of the training is to teach individuals how to empathize and engage with people who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.

According to the Campus Connect page on the counseling center's website, 65.1 percent of students want to know more about resources for helping students who are experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression.

But, why are mental health resources becoming more of a necessity in recent years? Is there any correlation between the severity of mental health issues and a college environment?

About 80 percent of college students who commit suicide never approached the campus counseling centers at their school, according to the USF Counseling Center's website.

"As troubling as the statistics are, it's also important to remember that the prevalence of suicide in college students is lower than for young adults who are not in college," said Colón. "Any occurrence of suicidal thought or action is troubling, but the environment of college [appears] to be a protective factor for young adults."

The obstacles that come with pursuing higher education could be a contributing factor, but schools like USF recognize that students need opportunities to release negative emotions. Resources like the Counseling Center aid in the design of USF's atmosphere.

However, counseling isn't always the first method of coping that people pursue. The expertise of a trained counselor is invaluable, but there are many supplemental ways of coping that help individuals who haven't had an opportunity to speak with a professional.

I asked several USF students about the coping strategies that

they practice in their daily lives to manage feelings of anxiety and sadness.

Kirsten Boehlke, a second-year mass communications student, said "I remove myself from situations that make me feel overwhelmed. I reach out to close friends and [get] lots of sleep."

Of the students I spoke to, many said that the first step of mental health management is to remove yourself from toxic situations and stop toxic behaviors.

Highlighting positives and distracting yourself from the negatives was another recurrent practice among the students I spoke to.

"Concentrate on something that last made [you] smile," said Kyden Payne, a second-year english major.

Christina Farese, a first-year nursing student, recommends writing down your thoughts and feelings.

"[I write] all of the thoughts in my head down on paper. It organizes my thoughts and helps me quiet my thoughts," said Farese.

Simple strategies like these help ease symptoms of anxiety and depression. Many seemingly unrelated parts of people's daily routines can exacerbate mental health issues.

Self-care is very important," said Colón. "Set up a consistent bedtime routine, [limit] caffeine and alcohol and [put] the phone down before bed to avoid stimulation."

Without the support of other people, it can be daunting to sift through emotions and interpret symptoms. By using USF-provided resources and creating personal tactics for betterment, anyone can successfully reduce anxious and depressive episodes.

"You are not alone and you do not have to deal with your symptoms alone. Anxiety and depression can be common in college, but the good news is, [they're] treatable," says Colón.

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CVA

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and is not a good long-term solution to have one or two full-time advocates with no real additional support.”

But that is the case currently.

As it stands, Ruthann Atchley, associate vice president of Community Engagement and the individual serving as interim director of the CVA, said there are two full-time advocates and she is hoping to bring on a third. However, doing so is proving to be a challenge,



Ruthann Atchley. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF

because the university at-large is under a “hiring freeze” in the era of change in presidential leadership.

One of those advocates is also filling the role of interim assistant director for the CVA. Atchley said that is a result of the individual once hired to take that role experiencing some “life changes” and no longer being able to do so.

Case loads are expected to increase in the fall and spring, given the amount of people on campus, compared to the 40-45 cases each person was responsible for over the summer.

The former employee said the current structure, of what they consider to be understaffing, is not a sustainable model and though the current advocates working in the CVA are certainly educated, they are “still human.”

“It’s a job where you have to be at your best,” the former employee said. “You have to be able to think clearly ... my concern is that if you are only one of two people — and you do not have 20 years of experience — that could lead to a lot of burn out, a lot of potential things being missed. To be able to do what they are doing with two people is just not realistic.”

Getting the CVA back to a place of stability is one of the main goals for Atchley, who has served as interim director since November.

Since then, Atchley said the CVA has implemented an “on-call program” so that there are a number of individuals working on-call in the evening and weekend hours in an effort to ensure that the workload is not piled on any single person.

“We are getting more in keeping with what should be best practice ... with the next advocate hire we are going to be getting much more in keeping with what the standard caseloads are for a university,” Atchley said.

A support system, in particular from members of the administration, is something the former employee said the CVA has been lacking for quite a while.

“It is already a very hard job to do, so when you are trying to provide those services — which is your job — and you

are met with challenge after challenge and lack of support, resources and advocacy for your department from upper administration, that is devastating,” the former employee said. “Regardless of what people want to think, the crimes are occurring. It’s not that if you take it away or just ignore it that it will stop, it’s just the opposite.”

Of those challenges put in the way of the CVA is the ongoing change in leadership.

At one point in particular, the former employee said decisions were made that resulted in the CVA losing some of its independence.

Just one of the instances in which there was a change in leadership resulted in the CVA sharing a director with Student Outreach and Support (SOS), which is a department that provides crisis intervention services and mental health support, case management and resources for students. This decision was made while Dr. Rita Debate was the associate vice president who oversaw the CVA and SOS.

The issue with this lies in that SOS is also a department that in the past has provided



Rita Debate. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF

such resources to the alleged perpetrators of the crimes committed against the victims the CVA is serving.

In an interview with The Oracle, Vice President for Student Success Paul Dosal, who oversees the CVA and other departments such as Student Government, The Counseling Center, Human Resources and others said that he has a “very hazy recollection” of how long the two departments shared a



Paul Dosal. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF

director and what brought it about, given that this period of time was approximately two years ago.

When The Oracle requested an interview with Debate to address such decisions and other alleged actions a number of times, university spokesperson Adam Freeman said Debate was “not available” for an interview, without providing a reason.

There have been other issues in regards to Debate’s judgement during her time in her role as associate vice president as well. This is made evident through a third-party, web-based hotline that allows members of the USF community to report issues

such as misconduct, abuse and fraud in an anonymous manner called EthicsPoint.

The Oracle obtained records of nine closed EthicsPoint cases in which Debate is accused of causing issue for direct and indirect reports since February of 2017.

In EthicsPoint case number 674, Debate is accused of “Yelling in meetings, using profanity, and placing people on her “list” when people do not align with her or present an opposing idea.”

Case number 601 alleges that Debate is “verbally and mentally abusive to staff within her unit at all levels.”

The anonymous reporter of case 771 said that a “culture of fear has been established within our unit.”

“Bullied,” “devalued” and “threatened” are among some of the terms the reporter of case 775 said they have felt when interacting with Debate.

The “impulsive decisions and this behavior will ultimately have a negative effect on students and their success,” the reporter of case 729 said.

Ultimately, the CVA was removed from Debate’s supervision and Atchley was chosen to fill the void to help spearhead the future of the center through methods like a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT).

The CCRT is a group of stakeholders responsible for shaping the future of the CVA and determining how it will function.

Although he credits Debate with advocating for and laying the foundation of the CCRT,

CVA

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Dosal said the change in leadership was a decision he made after CVA stakeholders and Debate had seemingly reached an "impasse" because of their "differences of opinion" when making decisions about the center's future.

"By making a change like that and bringing in fresh eyes in the form of Ruthann Atchley, plus bringing in the consultant and eventually forming the CCRT, we could more easily foster the more productive and campus-life discussion that we wanted to have," Dosal said. "It was sort of the means of breaking out of an impasse and creating an environment in which we could have what has turned out to be a lengthy but productive discussion."

As it stands, the CCRT has roughly 50 members from all



EthicsPoint is a platform in which members of the USF community can anonymously report any issues of concern, including harassment, misconduct and fraud, among others. **ORACLE PHOTO/JESSE STOKES**

three of USF's campuses as well as representation from the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, the University Police Department, related student organizations and other entities.

And it is not going anywhere soon.

"(The CCRT) will continue to exist forever," Atchley said. "But its role will probably move to more of an oversight and

support role rather than this visioning role that it is serving right now."

Atchley said that the CCRT has the extensive representation that it does, because the CVA is a department that works closely with a number of others on campus and different community organizations as well.

"... the conversation that I

have with my advocates more often than not is about the support they are getting from Academic Advocacy ... most of our victims, their number one concern, is to continue to process toward graduation, so our job is really around helping them achieve their academic success," Atchley said. "We are not mental health counselors, we do not try to help with that. We partner with them, the primary service we are providing is helping them stay on their academic path."

However, for Atchley, despite the past speedbumps of understaffing and a failure to have a meeting of the minds, she considers the path of the CVA moving forward to be in an upward trajectory.

"We are moving to a much more stable place as far as staffing and support are needed in that current space," Atchley said. "But that is sort of to keep

us going with the current model right now. What the CCRT is going to be doing is sort of answering for us a question of, "What should we become?"

When it comes to the issues the anonymous source is hoping will improve, it all comes down to respecting difference of opinion.

"What I am hoping is, as the university enters new leadership, that there will be an investment into taking everyone's view into consideration," the source said. "There are many different ways to reach goals for a university and I think the strength in accomplishing those goals are looking at the diversity in approaches and the diversity of people that get involved in helping to make these solutions. I think that the university would be a lot stronger in its endeavors if it respects opinions."

Narcolepsy



Have you been diagnosed with narcolepsy type 1 (narcolepsy **with** cataplexy)? Are you between the ages of 18-65 years? If so, you may be interested in this clinical research study.

The primary objective of the study is to characterize symptoms of excessive daytime sleepiness following treatment withdrawal in participants with narcolepsy type 1.

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- ★ Study-related costs included (laboratory tests, study visits, etc.)
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familiar with Buechele as well.

"I think we've played a couple of really good quarterbacks so far this year, and he's probably the best of the lot," Jean-Mary said, "but we have to go out there and do our best."

Buechele has already thrown for seven touchdowns and more than 1,100 yards. Since SMU uses short rushes to set up the long throw, the Bulls will have to limit Buechele's ability to complete the "home run" pass, according to Strong.

"They're going to take their shots," Strong said. "We can't give them the shots because it's one of those offenses where they'll run the ball, they'll run the ball, then they'll take a deep throw on you, and we've just got to be patient enough where coverage wise, we're not misaligned where we can run with their receivers and cover."

In addition to Buechele, Jean-

Mary and the Bulls face a balanced SMU offense — the Mustangs average almost 300 yards passing and more than 215 yards rushing. But the run is a critical part of SMU's "Air Raid" offense as it sets up the rest of the attack.

"They're committed to it," Jean-Mary said. "They're not a team that runs to get big plays. They're dedicated to running the ball, and they're OK with 2 and 3-yard gains because they really set up their passing game through their running game."

USF's defense may have its work cut out for it this weekend, but it's good having a team with an offense like SMU's in the AAC, according to Strong.

"You need teams that play well, because with the teams playing well, it makes the whole league look good."

BASKETBALLContinued from **PAGE 8**

other for at least a year, meaning the freshmen walk into a tight-knit environment.

"It actually speeds up the process for the two freshmen," Gregory said. "Because they have got everybody else around them that knows what's going on and it's easier for them to pick up stuff"

Gregory has been impressed with the way Chaplin and Mack have adapted to the team so far. He was impressed with the way both players played during the Canadian tour in August, but said he wants to see physical improvements.

The freshmen aren't the only players looking to improve, however.

Assistant strength and conditioning coach Zach Houghton tweeted a series of pictures in August showing the progress of eight players' physical improvements. In total, 13 players — including the freshmen — decreased their body-fat percentages from last year. For example, sophomore guard Xavier Castaneda went from more than 7 percent body fat to under 6 percent in the span of a year.

On top of physical improvements to the players, the team now seems to be heading in a defined direction. There is a big difference in where the team was last season compared with where it is this season, according to Gregory.

"Guys have gotten significantly better," Gregory said. "Heading into this point last year, we weren't exactly sure where we'd be ... now we kind of have an idea."

Part of the difference was last season's CBI-winning campaign, which set a new standard for the team.

Now, heading into this season, USF is seen as a threat in the AAC and is even considered a possible contender to make it to the NCAA Tournament by analysts like Andy Katz.

The standards keep rising for the Bulls, and Gregory is continuing to push his team to meet them.

"We can't lose sight of what helped build this program to where it's at right now," Gregory said. "There is no relief. There's a tendency to take a deep breath, 'OK, we made it.'"

"No, the price tag just increases."

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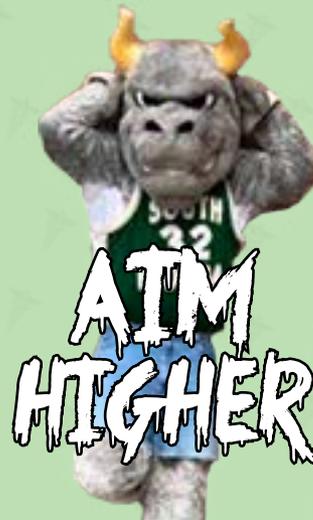
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Fighting the stigma with affordability in mental healthcare



Jared Sellick

COLUMNIST

Dealing with mental illness can often be a battle fought on two fronts. Those suffering still have to deal with all the problems associated with paying for treatment while at the same time dealing with the stigma often associated with mental illness.

We need to treat mental health issues with the same level of urgency as physical health issues.

When an individual is caught in a spiral of depression or obsessive thinking, friends and family are quick to prescribe positive thinking or going outdoors rather than encouraging them to seek out a mental health professional.

Mental health is an issue of physical well-being.

This issue affects far more people than many believe. According to the Mental Health First Aid website, nearly half of all Americans will suffer from a mental illness in their lifetime.

What's worse is only 41 percent of Americans who had a mental health disorder in 2018 were actually treated with professional health care services.

With that level of prevalence, we need to get rid of this harmful stigma against those with mental illness. There are often invisible



Mental healthcare needs to be as accessible as possible.
SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE

symptoms that are not always evident to those looking in.

There are a number of factors that go into why someone might not visit a doctor, a common one being a lack of resources. Although most healthcare insurance plans cover mental health coverage, there is still the problem of the 27.4 million people in the U.S. who do not possess any form of healthcare coverage.

A study from Mental Health America found that Florida was ranked No. 40 in the country for providing mental healthcare. Despite our relatively low levels of mental illness in Florida compared to other states, we are still low on the list for access to care. This is because of the lack of availability for those in the mental healthcare workforce and the fact that 2.6 million Floridians are uninsured.

This is compounded by the fact that mental illness is most prevalent in both uninsured and poor individuals according

to the Kaiser family foundation. According to a poll from the Kaiser family foundation, 13 percent of those who had experienced going without mental healthcare said they could not afford it and 12 percent said their insurance didn't cover it.

It's no surprise that cost would be a roadblock for patients. The average stay for an inpatient psychiatric hospital stay can run from 8,000 to 12,000 dollars according to Cambridge Health Alliance.

We are failing those with mental illness in this country. Both in our rhetoric and in our practices. The best thing we can do for those struggling is to fight the stigma while also fighting for increased insurance coverage.

For any student in need of psychological services the USF Psychological Services Center can be called for appointments at (813) 974-2496.

JaredSellickisajuniormajoring in political science.

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Suicide prevention month: Practical coping strategies from students and staff

Madeline Colón, one of the clinicians at USF's Counseling Center, discussed on-campus resources for students who may be dealing with suicidal thoughts. She shares, along with a select few USF students, several anxiety and mood management strategies.



Amelio Nazarko

FOCAL POINTS
EDITOR

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a time when individuals, communities and survivors unite under the shared goal of promoting suicide

RESOLUTION

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opposes the resolution because it covers "one side of the conflict."

"I'm really happy, seeing someone raising a voice and helping the student body to be more aware of what's happening internationally, but I do oppose the resolution since it's very one-sided and needs more clarity and support from both sides of the group," Thengale said.

The Oracle did not have access to the draft of the resolution as it is still under discussion.

Farooq said that the idea to write the resolution came after a "common understanding" regarding the human rights violations to the people of



About 80 percent of college students who commit suicide never approached the campus counseling centers at their school. **ORACLE FILE PHOTO**

prevention awareness. I spoke with Madeline Colón, a staff clinician at USF's counseling

center, about the center's role as a safe space for students to talk about mental health.

"We teach students coping skills to manage everyday stressors including adjusting

Kashmir and the importance to spread the word about the conflict.

"At this point, we are not here to lead people other ways as this issue is not about politics," Farooq said. "It's about condemning who is doing the wrong thing. And if we don't do it, then silence becomes consent. If we keep quiet and don't do anything, it means that we are okay with the oppressors."

According to Edwards, the mediation to discuss the resolution aims to give opportunity to represent both interests while hearing their concerns and suggestions.

"This [mediation] is to help with disputes that may cause turmoil in the future and allow

for collaboration on inclusive language that allows the students of Kashmir an opportunity to be heard, but the students of India or those who believe in their government to not feel completely excluded and blamed for the actions taking place," Edwards said. "Once we have the mediation, the hope is to have a cohesive document that has multiple pillars of support from all demographics on campus."

The SG Relations Committee oversees all the resolutions and is in charge of passing it to the Senate. In order for the resolution to be passed, a motion needs to be held and it must win by a majority of votes, both in the senate and in the Relations Committee.

Manushi Shah, president of the Students of India Association (SIA), shared why she believes representing the Indian demographic in the drafting of the resolution is important.

"The main reason why I had to be a spokesperson in this setting is because, as president of the Students of India Association (SIA), I have to keep my own bias and opinions aside to ensure that I'm representing the Indian demographic to their best interest," Shah said. "By participating in these discussions, I'm ensuring that the students from India have a voice."

According to SG Senate President Pro-Tempore Hernán Eduardo Benavides Córdova, the Relations Committee is trying

to college life, building healthy relationships and managing anxiety and depression," said Colón.

Untreated mental illness, substance abuse and feelings of hopelessness are a few significant factors that contribute to suicidal thoughts, said Colón.

Colón encouraged students and faculty to attend the upcoming Campus Connect training on Friday, Sept. 27 from 1-3:30 p.m. at EDU 316. Those interested can register on GEMS, accessible under the business systems section of USF's website.

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to find a more neutral way to change some of the language while listening to both sides of the conflict.

"The role of SG is to support our students being affected by the issue addressed in the resolution," Córdova said. "While we condemn the issue that is happening in Kashmir, we are not turning our backs to the Indian students. We don't want to make them feel unsafe or that their concerns are not being heard."

The date for the next meeting to discuss the resolution has not been decided yet. Students, including from the Pakistani Students Association (PSA) and the SG senate, started working on the resolution three weeks ago and it has not yet been passed.

Football

Defense looks to keep hot start going against SMU



Brian Hattab

SPORTS EDITOR

If a team ever has to play a hot offense, it may as well be when the defense is playing well.

USF (1-2) faces the task of stopping the No. 17 offense in FBS when it faces SMU (4-0) to open AAC play at Raymond James Stadium on Saturday at 4 p.m. (TV: ESPNU/Radio: WHNZ-AM 1250).

The Mustangs' offense, fresh off a 41-38 win against then-No. 25 TCU last weekend, comes in averaging 514 yards and 5.5 offensive touchdowns through four games.

But it's about to face a revitalized USF defense that's



USF's defense leads the nation in turnovers forced with 11. KJ Sails, pictured here against South Carolina State on Sept. 14, leads the team with three takeaways. **ORACLE PHOTO/LEDA ALVIM**

leading the nation in turnovers forced (11) and fumble recoveries (7) and is No. 2 in turnover margin (2.00). The Bulls' defense is also coming off a record-setting performance after taking the ball

away a program-best eight times against South Carolina State on Sept. 14.

"It's fun to be a part of a great defense — an attacking defense," graduate defensive back Devin

Studstill said. "Everybody's flying — everybody's flying for their brothers. I'm just happy to be a part of it."

Coming off a bye week also helps a USF defense that has

already faced the now-No. 8 team in the nation in Wisconsin and another Power Five opponent in Georgia Tech in Week 2.

"You always appreciate bye weeks, because no matter what time of the year it is, you always have guys that are a little banged up, that might not have been able to play in the following weekend," defensive coordinator Brian Jean-Mary said. "We had a couple guys like that on offense and defense, and I think for the most part, everybody's going to be healthy going into SMU."

Meanwhile, coach Charlie Strong will see a familiar face in the form of SMU quarterback Shane Buechele. The graduate transfer, currently in his first year at SMU, started 12 games as a true freshman at Texas in 2016, Strong's last season with the Longhorns.

Jean-Mary, who served as Texas' recruiting coordinator under Strong, is

See **FOOTBALL** on **PAGE 5**

Men's Basketball

Better, faster, stronger — Gregory's core crew returns



Nolan Brown

STAFF WRITER

As a college basketball team, it's one thing for a few standout players to return the following season.

After all, playmakers are typically experienced upperclassmen who are snapped up in the NBA Draft or simply graduate.

But USF faces an entirely different situation — all of its playmakers are back this season.

The Bulls practiced for the first time Tuesday in preparation for their season opener against Arkansas-Pine Bluff on Nov. 5.

As USF gears up for its season, coach Brian Gregory is no longer tasked with

laying the groundwork for his squad.

Now it's down to fine-tuning and gearing up for the new pressures the team faces after winning the College Basketball Invitational (CBI) championship last season.

"We have experience in terms of how we want to do things, how we want to practice," Gregory said.

The Bulls have the advantage of keeping their top-scoring guard pair from last season — junior David Collins and senior Laquincy Rideau. The two accounted for more than 38 percent of the Bulls' offense

last season.

Rideau and forward Antun Maricevic are the only seniors on the team. Gregory said they now have the responsibility of guiding the two new freshmen — guard Jamir Chaplin and forward B.J. Mack.

It happens that the freshmen play the same positions as the veterans, which should help the new players find their footing faster. Overall, the team has known each

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