Dean’s List sees slight decrease

TARA KULASH
Daily Egyptian

For the fall 2011 semester, 3,359 of the 15,000 undergraduate students made the Dean’s List, or 22 percent of the undergraduate population. Students who make the Dean’s List meet or exceed the standards set by their specific college while taking at least 12 credit hours. The minimum standard could vary from a grade point average of at least a 3.25, at the College of Engineering, to a minimum of a 3.75 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

I had more first-year students, so I’m thinking that it’s harder for first-year students to acclimate to college.
— Chancellor Rita Cheng

In spring 2011, 3,479 of the 14,050 undergraduate students made the Dean’s List, almost 25 percent. The fall 2010 semester brought in 3,674 Dean’s List students of 15,137 undergraduates. That semester had 24 percent of the undergraduate population on the list, 2 percent more than last semester’s.

Chancellor Rita Cheng said the slight drop could be attributed to the smaller amount of juniors and seniors in the previous year.

“We had more first-year students, so I’m thinking that it’s harder for first-year students to acclimate to college,” she said. “It could clearly be the slight change just because of the composition of undergraduates.”

Of Eastern Illinois University’s 9,657 undergraduates enrolled in the fall 2011 semester, 1,128 made the Dean’s List, or almost 11.7 percent. To make the list at EIU, students must have a 3.8 GPA on a 4.0 scale with at least 12 credit hours.

Some students at SIU say they believe making the Dean’s List could help advance them in their future careers.

Sam Milligan, a senior from Benton studying creative writing, has frequently made the Dean’s List but said he doesn’t think it’s going to do much for his occupation.

Recycled vegetable oil becomes food, fuel

ASHLEY ZOREK
Daily Egyptian

At 8 a.m. Friday, farmer Chet Stuenke drove around campus to collect barrels of used vegetable oil from the dining halls.

“This stuff will now power this truck and feed my cattle,” he said.

The university’s Dairy Center started taking otherwise useless vegetable-oil waste from the dining halls and turning it into food and fuel last spring.

Stuenke, Dairy Center manager, proposed the idea of using vegetable oil from dining halls and converting it to biodiesel and glycerol four years ago.

Last spring, the Student Dairy Club was awarded a $51,000 grant from the university’s green fund and $5,000 funding from the university for the project. Since then, they have been setting up equipment and testing the process to ensure its success.

“Before this, the used vegetable oil was either being made into soap, or, more commonly, put into landfills,” he said.

He said about 90 percent of the collected oil is recycled.

Several times a week Stuenke picks up the barrels of the oil and takes them to the university’s vermicompost center, a form of composting using worms, where it is then put into a large tank and converted into biodiesel fuel.

From there, the fuel can be used to power a diesel engine or be used to create a byproduct called glycerol. The byproduct can eventually substitute 10 percent of the Dairy Center’s cattle feed.

Stuenke said the project was originally faculty-based, but is now student-run.

Amer AbuGhazaleh, dairy-sciences specialist and associate professor of animal science, food and nutrition, said he conducts the research for the project.

“I focus on studying and evaluating the glycerol to see how we can get the most out of it for the cattle,” he said. “We’re always trying to find alternatives to better our dairy center and this was a great one.”

AbuGhazaleh said the club used the grant to buy the biofuel converter and to buy equipment to test the product’s quality.

Phil Gutton, director of Plant and Service Operations, said the project ties into the university’s concept of sustainability.

“We were really excited to help the dairy center,” he said. “The fact that you’ve got food waste going out to the vermicompost and now we have this waste oil being processed and reused as well just shows that there are so many great things we can do to improve this university’s situation.”

Dairy Center Manager Chet Stuenke, of Alton, fills a barrel with oil Thursday at Lanta Hall. Stuenke said he picks up the used oil from each dining hall weekly and transports it to a temporary location, where it is processed into biodiesel fuel. The fuel is then used to run machinery and its byproduct, glycerol, is used to feed cattle.
The Weather Channel® 5 day weather forecast for Carbondale

Today

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

54°
Partly Cloudy
10% chance of precipitation

52°
Cloudy
10% chance of precipitation

48°
Clouds in a.m.
0% chance of precipitation

54°
45°
Showers
40% chance of precipitation

About Us
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The DAILY EYGIPTIAN, the student-run newspaper of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, is committed to being a trusted source of news, information, commentary and public discourse, while helping readers understand the issues affecting their lives.

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Dean’s List

He said the people he will need to impress are publishers, and for graduate school, the admissions counselors will want to see his portfolio rather than grade point average. He said he still works hard in school anyway.

“I like to learn, so I’m not going to blow off my classes,” Milligan said. “It makes my mom happy, and some schools like an Ivy League would care.”

Kara Cox, a sophomore from Oakland studying agriculture education and animal science, said she puts a lot of pressure on herself to make the Dean’s List every semester. She said it’s a good resume booster and shows she’s a hard worker.

“I don’t know how much it will help me (in my career),” Cox said. “I think it will help me stand out in the interview process, but after a few years, who’s really going to care if I made the Dean’s List? Sometimes I wonder.”

Tara Kulash can be reached at kulash@dailyegyptian.com or 535-3311 ext. 255.

Biodiesel

The club’s plan has two phases to be instituted over five years. The goal of the first phase is to be able to convert the oil and make the Dairy Center eco-friendly. The goal of the second phase is to be able to implement it around campus and use it to produce electricity.

Stuemke said the idea of using biodiesel to produce electricity is not that abstract.

“All we would need is a biodiesel generator. Then we would no longer have to pay an electricity bill,” he said.

This would be a cleaner and safer alternative to coal power, he said.

Stuemke said the Dairy Center could eventually be self-sufficient.

“If we grow 40 acres of canola and press it, we could actually supply enough oil to cover all of the campus’ needs for a year,” Stuemke said.

“Then we can take the oil after it is used and turn it into biodiesel to power all of the equipment to harvest the canola.”

He said the glycerol could be used to feed the cows, along with the compressed canola mash. The cows’ manure could then be used to fertilize the next canola crop, he added.

The Dairy Club’s main goal was to reduce the university’s carbon footprint and save money.

Bunney Leffaron, chairwoman of the Green Fund Committee, said this project is the epitome of reduce, reuse and recycle.

“It’s a great step for this university and hopefully an example for local farmers,” she said.

Stuemke said the Dairy Center is basically the equivalent of a family farm.

“This is our opportunity to reach out to smaller farms and show them how to be efficient and that there are always new avenues,” he said. “This dairy farm may be an old facility, but we’re running on new ideas.”

Tossing bags
to win brags

NATHAN HOFERT | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Lean Johnson, left, plays a game of bag toss Thursday while Dacie Crameens, a volunteer for adult day service, watches the throw at the Senior Adult Services in Carbondale. The adult day service offers Bingo, Dominos, “Movie Fridays” and more for attendees to compete in. “It helps a lot of people to socialize and enjoy other people,” said Mary Jane McAfferty, coordinator for the service.

Chicago asked not to stifle wireless at summits

DON BABWIN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Protesters will be flocking to Chicago for May’s G-8 and NATO summits armed with smartphones, video cameras and links to social media sites they’ll use for strategizing and sharing images of what’s happening — right in front of a police force known for responding with tough tactics.

Now a city councilman wants to forbid the police department from pulling the plug on the electronic communication during the events, taking away a tactic employed by authorities during a crackdown on democratic protests in Egypt and during protests in the San Francisco Bay Area last year.

“We’re putting down a marker and saying this has happened in other places and we don’t even want it considered here,” said Alderman Ricardo Munoz, who proposed his anti- crackdown ordinance at a Chicago City Council meeting Wednesday, after which it was referred to a committee.

Munoz said he has no indication police are contemplating shutting down cellphone use or social media sites. A police department spokeswoman said Superintendent Garry McCarthy has no plans to take such a step.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s office has said the same thing. But after he was asked Wednesday whether he was concerned that an ordinance could hamstring the police department’s ability to react to an emergency, Emanuel would only say that “Garry and Al (Wyzyngter McCarthy’s first deputy superintendent) are working with the alderman on that.”

Munoz’s determination to take the tactic off the table is an acknowledgement that the front line at mass protests is increasingly technological as officials and protesters search for a balance between security and freedom of speech.

It also illustrates a growing nervousness about potential clashes in a city where the police force is dogged by memories of officers clubbing protesters during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. More recently, the police were admonished by a judge for the way they arrested masses of demonstrators during a 2003 Iraq War protest, and the city announced last week it was paying more than $6 million to settle a lawsuit.
Family, friends gather to honor Don Cornelius

THURSDAY - Friends and family gathered Thursday for a private memorial service for Soul Train creator and host Don Cornelius in Los Angeles. They gathered at the Shrine Auditorium, where a live band was playing and attendees were seated in the audience.

Cornelius died Feb. 6 from a stroke. He was 75. He had been a fixture on Soul Train for decades and had a huge influence on the music industry.

The memorial was attended by a large crowd of fans and friends of Cornelius. The service was led by a gospel choir and included a reading of the Bible and a prayer.

After the service, attendees were given a chance to view a video tribute to Cornelius and to view photos of the host.

The memorial was a chance for fans to pay their respects to a man who had a huge influence on the music industry.

Cornelius was born in 1940 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He started his career as a disc jockey and went on to create the popular television show Soul Train.

He was known for his energetic dance moves and his ability to connect with the audience.

Cornelius hosted the show for over 30 years and it became one of the most successful music programs in television history.

In 1985, Cornelius was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

He was also a frequent performer at the Grammys and other music awards.

Cornelius' death was a shock to many fans and the music industry.

A service of prayer and thanksgiving will be held on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 11 a.m. at the Shrine Auditorium.

The service is open to the public and will be streamed online for those who cannot attend.

Cornelius is survived by his wife, Laila, and his four children.
Opinion

Editorial Policy
Our Word is the consensus of the Daily Egyptian Editorial Board on local, national and global issues affecting the Southern Illinois University community. Viewpoints expressed in columns and letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect those of the Daily Egyptian.

Guest Column

On Iran, a stark choice

BENNY MORRIS
Los Angeles Times

Most people in the Arab world, according to opinion polls, believe the Holocaust never happened, that it’s a Jewish invention and a trick to win the world’s sympathy and support. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran is similarly minded; he has said so countless times.

In the West, speaking of the Holocaust, most leaders and commentators concede that it did, indeed, occur. But, privately and sometimes publicly, some tell the Israelis: “Get over it.” They mean that the murder of 6 million Jews during World War II should not dominate, or perhaps even strongly influence, Israel’s policies today.

But is this reasonable or even moral? Should Israel set aside the memory and reality of what happened to its people, and conduct its life as a nation as if nothing happened?

The fact is that Iran’s leaders, reflecting Israeli public opinion, take very seriously Iran’s oft-repeated threat to create a second Holocaust, to wipe the Jewish state — “the Zion entity” or “Zionist regime,” as the Iranians call it — off the map. They take equally seriously Iran’s nuclear program, which the international community, after years of denial or at least skepticism, now accepts is geared to the production of nuclear weapons. Israelis, at least those who don’t bury their heads in the sand, believe that if the Iranians get nuclear weapons they will, in the end, use them — or at a minimum, cannot be relied on not to use them — and that Israel’s very existence is at stake.

After years of Israeli caution and bluster, the United States and the European community have at last started to impose serious sanctions against Tehran, targeting its oil industries and some other countries, and are not on board or are actively subverting these sanctions, rendering them ultimately ineffective. The Iranians have said as much. They will not abandon their nuclear program, even if the sanctions bite into their citizens’ living standards.

(According to the Israeli military intelligence chief, Iran suffers from 24 percent annual inflation, 16 percent unemployment, its currency, the rial, has been depreciating by leaps and bounds.)

Yet America’s and Europe’s leaders tell Israel: Wait, give the sanctions time.

But time has almost run out. U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has publicly stated that if Iran decided to do it, it could have the bomb within a year and the means to deliver it a year or two later. And perhaps Panetta is wrong — perhaps there is less time than he thinks.

Or, as Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak put it earlier this month, those who advise Israel to wait till later may end up discovering that “later is too late.”

The choice is clear and stark. Either Iran, led by fanatical, brutal and millenarian leaders, will get the bomb, or it will be prevented from doing so by military assault on its nuclear installations, by America or Israel. If the Americans, who have the capability to do a thorough job, don’t do it — and they don’t seem to have the stomach for it after Iraq and Afghanistan — then the Israelis, with their more limited capabilities, will have to.

How Washington, which has repeatedly and more or less publicly vetoed the idea, would react to an Israeli strike deeply worries policymakers in Jerusalem. But it worries them far less than a nuclear-weaponized Iran. And besides, some Israeli officials believe that in an election year, President Obama would be seriously handicapped when considering anti-Israeli measures.

Of course, Iran, while not as powerful as some rhetoric often suggests, is no paper tiger. It may react to an Israeli strike as Syria did in 2007 when Israel took out its North Korean-designed nuclear reactor — by doing nothing. But a more likely scenario is a worldwide increase in oil prices and conventional and terrorist confrontations against targets ranging from Israel to the Gulf of Hormuz to Iraq and Afghanistan to Western installations around the world. And an Israeli or American attack on Iran would likely rile much of the Muslim world, causing wide-ranging political fallout. But the consequences of nuclear bombs hitting Tel Aviv and Haifa — effectively destroying Israel, a very small country — are even more dire, certainly as seen from Sydney.

The Israelis may have the capability, using conventional weapons, to only delay the Iranian nuclear program and only for a few years. But any delay is good; perhaps the international community — who knows, maybe even the Russians — will wake up to the danger of a nuclear Iran and take effective measures to halt the Iranian nuclear weapons program definitively.

But one thought obstinately eludes all else: If the Iranian nuclear project is not halted now by conventional means, there will be, by miscalculation, Iranian assault or Israeli preemption, a nuclear war in the Middle East.

Here at SIU, we pregamme harder than we study

Dear Editor:

I’ve been reading a lot lately about the decline in enrollment and the discontent this has caused. I’ve read about it being blamed on the ‘war on fun’. I sympathize with this idea to some extent, but feel those policies ought to be put in context. What has stood out to me during the seven months I’ve been here is the wanton violence and destruction. On the last unfootball Halloween weekend, I saw someone’s car get destroyed. He was trying to leave a party and was run down by about five other people who began to beat his car. They kicked body panels, threw bottles at it — someone even jumped on the trunk and punched it in the back window.

At the end of last semester, four cars in my apartment’s parking lot suffered various forms of damage. It ranged from punched-out side mirrors to someone who had their front end smashed in with a rusty metal bar. Another car down the street from me was beaten to pieces with an uprooted street sign that same weekend. When my friend came down here, someone ran up one side of his car and the other.

Every Monday, there’s new broken glass in the streets from the latest party weekend. More than once I’ve come to my apartment, often in the middle of the day, to find some kid trying to yank a bike off the rack. There were armed guards at my complex for Polar Bear weekend.

Last week, I found a used needle in the street, for crying out loud.

So I understand why Halloween weekend has been cancelled. We’ve somberly had Halloween riots since the ‘80s when Playboy coined our party school reputation. You can see the many riots since 2000 on YouTube. It’s no wonder campus, city, county and state police showed up to the Towers last weekend when the power went out. SIU students don’t just party, they party.

But I think we’re wrong. I think SIU is a decent school. Not the best in the business, but certainly not the worst. It has a large, beautiful campus and the locals define the meaning of southern hospitality. Coming from the frigid six months of Chicago winters I’m used to, the weather here is phenomenal.

When I look back on this year, I came here to study. I’m 27 years old so I’ve had my crazy parties, nights of bad decisions and days of carelessness — but never to this extent. It is depressing and distracting to see so much senselessness from myself.

What can the university do about it? Not much. It seems to be more of an issue with the quality of students we are attracting to this school. Raising admission standards to garner more serious students won’t do a thing for enrollment.

Given the chance to transfer to another school, I feel sad to say I’d probably take it. I like it down here. But I feel many students don’t take this seriously, which makes me feel many employers won’t take my SIU degree seriously. Our university should read, “We pregamme harder than we study.”

Sean Martin
sophomore from Glendale Heights
studying electrical engineering
US officials tie terror group to Syrian bombings

KIMBERLY DOZIER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Top U.S. intelligence officials pointed to al-Qaeda in Iraq on Thursday as the likely culprit behind recent bombings in Syria, the deadliest attacks against the Syrian government in the 11-month uprising.

Though the U.S. has called for Syrian President Bashar Assad to step down, his fall could lead to a power vacuum that al-Qaeda’s largest regional affiliate or other extremist groups could fill, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told Congress. And that could allow such groups to help themselves to Syria’s vast stockpiles of chemical weapons.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the crisis in Syria has become “that much more serious” and worrisome to the United States as a result of indications that al-Qaeda has infiltrated the government’s opposition.

“It does raise concerns for us that al-Qaeda is trying to assert a presence there,” he said. “As to just what their role is and how extensive their role is, I think that still remains to be seen.”

In New York, meanwhile, the U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution backing an Arab League plan calling for Assad to step down and strongly condemning human rights violations; it said his government had committed. The vote, though not legally binding, reflects widespread world opinion.

Likewise, in Vienna, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accused the Syrian government of committing “almost certain” crimes against humanity as activists reported fresh violence and the arrest of several prominent dissidents, including a U.S.-born blogger.

The comments by Panetta and Clapper in Washington marked a diplomatically dissonant moment of near-agreement between American officials and the Syrian leadership—2013 targets in Damascus in December, and two more recent bombings in the nation’s largest city, Aleppo, bear “all the earmarks of an al-Qaeda-like attack,” leading the U.S. intelligence to believe the Islamic militant branch is extending its reach into Syria.

He added the mixture of Syrian opposition groups may have been infiltrated by such militants, probably beyond their knowledge. “We’ve seen evidence of Sunni extremists,” he said. “Can’t label them specifically as al-Qaeda, but similar ilk who are infiltrating the oppositionist groups.”

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Exploring new territory

Brandon Trammel, a junior from Marion studying printmaking, draws on stone Thursday during a printmaking class at the Allyn Building. Trammel said he usually prefers etching for his assignments. But Trammel said he’s giving stone lithography a try for his next assignment after his instructor, Travis Janssen, a visiting assistant professor in the School of Art and Design, introduced him to it. Students are instructed to use the technique they are most comfortable with, but they are also encouraged to experiment with new forms.

Lawmaker proposes tax for Illinois strip clubs

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — An Illinois lawmaker wants to tax admissions to strip clubs to raise money for sexual assault prevention, arguing that a mix of alcohol and nude dancing contribute to violence against women.

Sen. Toi Hutchinson, D-Olympia Fields, is calling for the clubs to pay a $5 tax for every customer. She plans a news conference Friday with Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon and women’s advocates to promote the legislation.

Simon said Thursday that she has no problem with the state collecting money from an industry that she considers harmful.

“I think it’s fair to lean on those sorts of entertainment to provide money for services intended to reduce violence toward women,” said Simon, a Carbondale Democrat.

Strip clubs strongly object to the plan — at least at the $5 level — and disagree with the claim that their clubs contribute to violence. They predict a tax would force smaller clubs to close their doors, putting people out of work.

A lobbyist for the Illinois Club Owners Association said there may be ways that strip clubs can contribute without being driven out of business.

“At some point, we’re going to try to come in with an alternative plan with money for the state coming from our industry,” lobbyist Al Roman, a former legislator, told the Chicago Tribune. “We’re not out to kill it. We’re out to do it right.”

Texas has a similar law that taxes the businesses per customer, which was upheld by the state’s Supreme Court last year. Officials say the Texas law could raise as much as $44 million.

The Illinois legislation would apply to strip clubs that sell liquor or allow customers to bring it in. Clubs could choose how to collect the tax, whether it’s raising entrance fees, charging more for drinks or taking it from the bottom line.

“My kids are growing up in a different age, a different time, and I want the communities that they live in to be safe for them,” Hutchinson said. “We all need to be working toward a society that understands violence against women is inappropriate in all circumstances and all times.”

The executive director of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Polly Poskin, said there is little chance the tax would close strip clubs. But they should be required to help women who need aid, she said.

“It’s selling women’s bodies for business profits. We know from our work and the studies we look at that these effects on women are very detrimental and harmful,” Poskin said.

There were over 5,000 sexual assaults reported to Illinois law enforcement in 2009, although many go unreported, she said.

David E. Smith, executive director of the Illinois Family Institute, said his ideal solution would be to shut the strip clubs down, but he doesn’t object to taxing them for help sexual assault victims and prevention. He doubts it will force any clubs to close.

“We keep taxing tobacco, but they keep selling cigarettes,” Smith said.

The bill is SB3348.
A deliberate act of kindness

Mike Sceffo, a junior from Chicago studying art and photography, helps Ann DeHorn, of Carbondale, Thursday along the sidewalks of campus. Sceffo said he knows DeHorn personally from church. With his hand on her shoulder, Sceffo said, “It’s always good to see you.”
A venture into Lusk Creek Canyon

STAFF COLUMN

CALEB MOTSINGER
Daily Egyptian

The sky seemed bigger at Lusk Creek Canyon as I stood atop one of the sandstone cliffs, patiently carved through time by the creek as it meandered into the Ohio River.

The Lusk Creek Canyon Wilderness Area, located in Pope County, is only an hour southeast of SIUC’s campus. The hike from the road is a 1.5-mile descent into true southern Illinois wilderness; the reward waits at the bottom, where there are some of the most breathtaking views within the Shawnee National Forest.

The Indian Kitchen Trailhead that leads into the hollows of The Lusk Creek Canyon natural area is arguably the least civilized piece of land in the Midwest. The term Indian Kitchen refers to an acute cliff that bends around the creek. Its name is derived from the archeological evidence of prehistoric people who used the area as a place to cook and store food.

Sandstone cliffs towering above the creek create narrow ravines in which the headwaters of Lusk Creek rise and fall with the changes of water levels.

One could easily lose him or herself within the brier thickets woven between the trail and the canyon. Equestrians, kayakers and hikers alike venture year-round into the canyon, with visitors seldom seen but evident through a maze of dead-end paths and winding trails.

Don’t let Lusk Creek Canyon’s beauty fool you, though. The seasons take a toll on the area, with flash floods known to cascade through the canyon without a moment’s notice.

Brian Bourne, supervisor for trails and recreation with the U.S. Forest Service, said to always let someone else know when venturing into any area of the Shawnee, and to plan ahead and prepare for seasonal conditions.

The 125 acres that encompass the wilderness hold a special place in my heart; the smell of the red cedar trees and the occasional sight of a bald eagle made any potential dangers worthwhile as I looked out over the creek.

From the first time my father took me into the canyon in 1995 to Sunday’s venture, the canyon has never ceased to amaze me.

The cool of the caves on warm summer days, the bubbling spring whitewater and the resonant canyon walls draped in ice all offer a getaway without leaving southern Illinois.

Caleb Motsinger can be reached at cmotsinger@dailyEgyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 269

BASEBALL

CONTINUED FROM 1

“Last year, we kind of were just throwing guys into the fire without any experience, and I think that’s why we struggled early on,” pitching coach PJ Finigan said. “This year, those guys look good now and I think we’ll hit the ground running with them because they do have experience.”

Dorris, of Marion, played with Vanderbilt as a freshman before transferring to Rend Lake Community College for the 2011 season. Finigan said the movement of Dorris’ pitches could be the best on the team.

“If he can go out there and consistently throw strikes, he’s going to have a great year,” Finigan said. “He’s a guy that will be playing pro-ball someday.”

While Finigan said they have high expectations for their starters, the bullpen could be a bright spot for the team, even though injuries wore them down last year.

“There were times (last season) where we looked down at the bullpen, we had six freshmen … and that was it,” Henderson said. “That was nerve-racking last year, but it’s a blessing now as you look back on it, because all of those guys got opportunities that they normally wouldn’t have.”

Even though sophomore left-handed pitcher Tyler Dray led the Salukis with eight saves last year, Henderson said sophomore right-handed pitcher Todd Eaton will get the call to close out games in the ninth.

Finigan said Eaton worked on developing a slider to complement his fastball and change-up because he could barely throw his curveball effectively last season. Finigan said it wasn’t an easy pitch for Eaton to pick up at first.

“After a while it was just like banging your head against a brick wall,” Finigan said. “He’s a hard worker, and once he started throwing it, he got a good feel for it and he’s really taken off from there.”

Finigan and hitting coach Ryan Strain are in their second season, along with Henderson. Henderson, who had an interim title last season, said he feels a lot more comfortable now that his coaching staff has more experience.

First pitch against North Florida will be 5 p.m. Friday.

Joe Rugga can be reached at jrugga@dailyEgyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 269

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SECOND PLACE
$150 GIFT CARD TO PRIORITY SPORTS

THIRD PLACE
FULL MEN’S COLLEGE BRACKET• PRIVATE USER GROUPS• TEAM PAGES
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HOSTED BY THE DAILY EGYPTIAN
Season starts Friday for Saluki baseball

JOE RAGUSA
Daily Egyptian

The SIU baseball team hasn’t made it to the NCAA regional tournament since 1990, before several players on the team were even born. But coach Ken Henderson says he’s prepared his team to change that.

“I told our kids there’s no reason that this can’t be the team. It’s been 22 years; it’s going to happen at some point,” Henderson said. “Are we good enough? We’ll wait and see. I don’t know … but it certainly won’t be because of our lack of effort.”

Saluki baseball kicks off their 2012 campaign Friday when they begin a three-game series against North Florida in Jacksonville, Fla. The Missouri Valley Conference preseason poll predicts the Salukis will finish in sixth place, but junior outfielder Nick Johnson said he doesn’t agree.

“We always seem to be picked low, and I don’t know why that is,” Johnson said. “This year especially, I think that we have a chance to win the MVC. If we don’t, I feel like that’s a failure to us.”

Henderson said Missouri State, which finished first in the MVC preseason poll, is the clear favorite to win the conference. But he also said there’s a lot of parity in the MVC, which means that poll doesn’t mean much.

“Two through six (in the MVC poll) could be in any order, with the number of quality people that all these programs have,” Henderson said. “It was a close vote, and it’s not a big deal. If it helps motivate our kids, then that’s tremendous … but it really doesn’t matter.”

The Saluki offense will get their biggest bat back in junior first baseman Chris Serritella, who sat out all of the 2011 season with a wrist injury. Even though he didn’t play during the spring, he was drafted in the 3rd round of the 2011 MLB Draft in June by the Kansas City Royals.

“If he’s healthy last year, he’s nowhere right now, he’s playing professionally,” Henderson said. “I think he’s a better hitter than he was two years ago.”

Serritella said he wasn’t that tempted to sign because he wanted to end his Saluki career on a positive note. But if he is drafted again this year, he said he will most likely turn pro.

Henderson said Serritella will bat third for the team, and behind him in the four hole will be junior outfielder Jordan Sivertsen. Serritella and Sivertsen, who hit .297 with 48 runs batted in and nine home runs in 2011, were the only Salukis named to the All-MVC preseason team.

“The key to the season, if he can have a good year like he did last year,” Henderson said. “You can’t pitch around (Serritella) if (Sivertsen) is having a great year, because he has some power potential too.”

With Serritella back, Henderson said it allows him to move sophomore infielder Austin Montgomery and junior infielder Brock Harding down in the lineup after those two hit in the three and four spots last season.

“These guys had to hit in spots in the lineup that they weren’t exactly suited for last year, so we’ve got guys in a place where they fit in better,” Henderson said. “Those four guys (Serritella, Sivertsen, Montgomery and Harding) will form the nucleus of the lineup in the middle.”

Henderson said junior infielder Wes Neece will bat around the front of the lineup, most likely in the leadoff spot, but he hasn’t set the lineup in stone. He said Sivertsen, Johnson and junior Ronnie Tingguio will likely man the outfield for the first series, while Serritella, Harding, Neece and sophomore Donny Duschinsky will play in the infield.

Henderson said senior Brian Raiser will get the call at catcher with senior Dustin Huff who will also see playing time behind the plate.

With the pitching staff, the weekend rotation will consist of juniors Cody Forysthe and Nathan Dennis and senior Cameron Mahnmalado.

Forysthe was 8-5 with a 2.35 earned run average with 69 strikeouts in 71 walks in 2011, while Mahnmalado was 5-7 with a 6.19 ERA in his first year as a Saluki.

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