

Beaver College reborn as Arcadia University

by Billy O'Keefe
TMS Campus
November 20, 2000

The Beav has left the building. Pennsylvania's Beaver College, in hopes of tempering ridicule and boosting enrollment, announced Monday that it would change its name to Arcadia University.

The college unveiled the new moniker, selected through a poll of more than 20,000 students, alumni, faculty and parents, as well as a handful of university focus groups, at an impromptu slumber party for students, whom staffers rounded up with less than an hour's notice.

The new name, which becomes official July 16, 2001, could be a major boon for the school, which claims to lose a significant portion of prospective students each year on the issue of the name alone.

"The word 'beaver' too often elicits ridicule in the form of derogatory remarks pertaining to the rodent, the TV show 'Leave It to Beaver' and the vulgar reference to the female anatomy," Beaver president Bette E. Landman wrote in a letter sent last month to members of the community.

Landman isn't kidding: everyone from Conan O'Brien and David Letterman to Howard Stern and the cast of "Saturday Night Live" have garnered laughs at the college's expense.

But the college, which claims that the name regularly turns off more than 30 percent of its prospective student base, isn't laughing along. And, according to Landman, both

current and former students have faced unnecessary challenges because of the 'B' word.

"There are alumni reports that our name presents an obstacle when seeking employment, and that some have chosen not to display their diplomas to avoid unkind remarks from colleagues," wrote Landman.

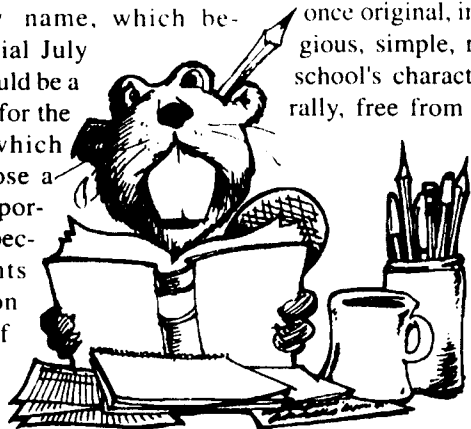
Trustees at the college voted in June to change the school's name.

In order to streamline the search for a new name, the college created the Name Finding Task Force, which comprised of students, faculty, alumni and trustees. The goal was to find a name that was at once original, intriguing, prestigious, simple, reflective of the school's character—and, naturally, free from potential ridicule.

"Arcadia University reflects our foundation and the kind of learning environment we aim to foster," said Landman at the unveiling.

The winning name comes from the name of a region in ancient Greece, which the university calls "a birthplace of modern thought and learning where philosophers pursued independent thought and inquiry."

Founded in 1853, Beaver College received its original name from its location in Pennsylvania's Beaver County. Interestingly, the 2,800-student institution left Beaver in 1925 for the Philadelphia suburb of Glenside. The school applied for university accreditation in June, and was recently approved by the state of Pennsylvania.



NCAA graduation rates improve, but barely

by Wendell Barnhouse
Knight-Ridder Newspapers
November 20, 2000

FORT WORTH -- A decade of reporting graduation rates has led to just slight improvements in NCAA Division I graduation rates of college athletes.

As mandated by federal law, the NCAA released its annual Graduation Rates Report on Monday. For the class that entered in the fall of 1993, 58 percent of student-athletes graduated from the school at which they began as freshmen. That graduation rate is the same as the 1999 Report, which tracked freshmen who started school in 1992. The graduation rate for all students at Division I schools was 56 percent.

"Overall, these rates are similar to those we've been seeing for student-athletes for the past several years," NCAA president Cedric Dempsey said. "For the most part, student-athletes are performing steadily in the classroom."

The graduation rates don't always reflect the academic performance for a school or a specific sport at individual schools. The data track student-athletes who enroll as freshmen, receive athletics-related financial aid (scholarships) and graduate from that school within six years of initial enrollment. Student-athletes who transfer count against their original institution and are not counted at the school to which they transfer, whether or not they graduate.

TCU fared well. The school's student-athlete graduation rate was 62 percent, above the national average. In grad rates for female student-athletes, men's basketball and women's basketball student-athletes, TCU was above the national average. Only in male student-athletes and football players was TCU below the national norm.

Big 12 Conference schools -- who were still members of the Big

Eight and Southwest conferences when the 1993 class entered school -- did not fare as well. In football, only two schools (Baylor and Nebraska) were above the national average. In men's basketball, only Kansas was above the national average. Only Baylor and Texas A&M had grad rates for male student-athletes that were above the national average.

"This is an area where we want to do better, and we've focused a lot of attention on academics," Big 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg said. "In some respects, those results aren't that surprising. The gap between student-athlete rates and the overall student body at our schools is not that great."

"Our schools have made an increasing investment over the last five years in academic support for student-athletes. I think that will start showing some positive results."

When the Big 12 was formed in 1996, it voted to not accept student-athletes who did not qualify under NCAA initial eligibility standards. The graduation rates that will show an impact of that decision will be in 2002.

Among Division I-A football schools in Texas, Rice had the highest grad rate for male (85 percent) and female (81 percent) student-athletes. Rice also had the highest grad rate for football (75 percent). Lamar had the lowest rate (7 percent) for male student-athletes, and Houston had the lowest (35 percent) for female student-athletes. Among I-A football programs in Texas, the lowest grad rates were at UT-El Paso (13 percent).

Nationally, the biggest decline among student-athlete groups was in Division I-A football. Graduation rates for football players dropped from 51 percent to 48 percent. That equals the all-time low for football players, 48 percent in 1985, the first-year grad rates were reported. The graduation rate for Division I-A

white football players was 55 percent, a 6 percent decline.

"We're concerned about the decline in rates among football players," Dempsey said. "There's been a slow, steady decline in the overall rate for this group for a number of years. We need to start looking at what some of the reasons for that might be."

Men's basketball showed a slight increase in graduation rates, from 41 percent to 42 percent. The rate for Division I black male basketball players also increased, from 33 percent to 34 percent. However, those rates are far below the overall student rate and the rates of other Division I sports, such as football and women's basketball.

"When you look at the numbers, the initial reaction is we should be doing better," said Jim Haney, executive director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches. "But when you look at the numbers, it's not particularly a reflection of what's going in men's basketball. With so many players transferring and leaving early for the NBA, that sort of skews the graduation rates for the sport."

Proposed NCAA legislation could alter how grad rates are determined. One proposal would allow student-athletes who transfer in good academic standing (still to be defined) to not count against his initial school's rate. Also, legislation that would limit the number of basketball scholarships a school can award over a two-year period is designed to curb the number of transfers.

The NCAA established initial eligibility requirements in 1986. Known as Proposition 48, the legislation required incoming student-athletes to achieve a certain score on standardized entrance tests. Since those standards began affecting graduation rates, student-athletes have remained in the 57 or 58 percent range.

Teens turn to Ecstasy as pot use declines

by Matthew McGuire
TMS Campus
November 27, 2000

Marijuana use decreased over the last three years among American teenagers, however, an increased use of the club-drug ecstasy shows drug use as a whole is not declining, according to a new study by the Partnership for a Drug Free America.

The study, released Monday, Nov. 27, polled 7,290 teenagers between the ages 12 and 18 and in grades 7 through 12. The margin of error is plus or minus 1.5 percent.

In 2000, about 40 percent of teens reported trying marijuana at least once, down from 44 percent in 1997. The study also found a drop in the number of teens who had used marijuana within the last month, down from 24 percent in 1997 to 21 percent in 2000.

"The shifts we're seeing with marijuana - which by and large represents the bulk of illicit drug use among kids - suggest good things for the future," PDFA president Richard D. Bonnette said in a statement. "With this particular drug, we appear to be turning a very important corner. But as we turn one corner, troubling developments are coming at us from other directions - specifically with Ecstasy. While the overall usage numbers are much lower for this drug, the spike we're seeing demands our attention."

The drop in marijuana use occurred mostly between 1997 and 1999, as figures between 1999 and 2000 stabilized. Use of ecstasy, however, increased during the same time frame.

About 10 percent of teens reported using ecstasy in 2000, twice the number who reported using the club-drug in 1995. While the number doubled over the last five years, the most significant increase took place over the last year, as use among teens increased from seven percent in 1999 to 10 percent in 2000.

The study also found small, but statistically significant increases in teen methamphetamine and inhalant use. Use of cocaine, crack, heroin and LSD remained stable.

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