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Activities fee leads to controversy

by Steven R Landon
Collegian Staff

A student activities fee may be in place as soon as next Fall for all Penn State students.

A \$25 per semester charge to all full-time students has been proposed to the University's Board of Trustees (BOT) by the President's office. The money raised by the fee will be used to supplement funds allocated for student activities and programs. The BOT will vote on whether to accept the proposal Friday morning.

The meeting will also mark the opening address of the new President of Penn State University, Graham Spanier.

The concept of the activities fee is not a new one. In the late 1940's, a fee was instituted to pay for the Hetzel Union Building in University Park. In 1953, construction of that building was completed. Proposals in 1985 and in 1992 to reinstate an activities fee were stalled by student opposition.

Last year the concept was proposed again, this time by student leaders. In efforts that began right here at Behrend, the fee was proposed as our only option amid State cuts to maintain and expand student life-related services and programs.

Behrend Student Government Association (SGA). President Mike Woycheck feels the fee is necessary in order to narrow the gap between budget requests and the money SGA is able to allocate.

"Last year SGA received approximately \$160,000 in requests from student organizations but could only fund \$60,000," Woycheck said.

According to Dean of Student Affairs Chris Reber that figure of \$60,000 has remain unchanged in approximately five years despite an almost doubling of the number of student organizations.

The University evaluated the way it spends money last year in a "Futures Process." In that evaluation Behrend was asked to cut 36% from it's budget for student activities related programs. Student activities and programs have been low on the University's priority list when in competition with expanding faculty and facilities at all campuses.

Provost and Dean Dr. John Lilley advocates the fee to compensate for lack of funding for activities. "Student Affairs really took it in the neck," Lilley said. "The student activity fee would help us recover a lot."

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Photo by Collen Gritzer/ Collegian Photographer
Stocker leads the Lions: Senior defenseman Julie Stocker lead the Lady Lions to a victory in the first varsity game in school history. For more details on the game see page 12.

Renovations for higher learning

by Sean Siekkinen
Collegian Staff

It has been seven years since the Behrend's most heavily trafficked and widely used building has undergone a facelift.

The 26-year old Reed Student Union Building, along with the Nick Building and the Carriage House, is now in the final stages of a \$700,000 renovation project promising to yield benefits similar to those of the renovations in 1988 which added the campus bookstore.

Construction in the Reed Building, which began in early May, has added Student Activities offices and a new Commons area where the former library was located. Space that had been occupied by Student Activities now houses new office space for faculty and staff. The first floor boasts eight new offices as well as refurbished restrooms.

Although contractor H. Platt Co. did not meet the original project deadline of July 31, Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Chris Reber said, "Right now, renovations are 98 percent

complete."

The unfinished Commons area is being refurbished independently by Penn State and therefore is not considered part of the project, according to Reber.

"In the future, the next phase of renovations will involve the retiling and completion of the Commons area, the addition of new student mailboxes, and more space for Career Development offices," he said.

Reber believes that a college's physical surroundings have a major impact on how students and faculty feel about learning and about the school itself.

"Our beautiful setting allows people to experience the beauty of the campus and to be comfortable at the same time. We pay attention to aesthetics without sacrificing efficiency. We've made [the Reed Building] attractive and functional."

Director of Student Affairs, Chris Rizzo says the goal of the renovation project is to create a more student-friendly Reed Building.

"In just the time that I've been here [since 1992], Behrend has been a very exciting

place to be," he says. "While other colleges are experiencing reduction phases, we're in an expansion phase."

"I hope that new and returning students alike will see the renovations as a very positive thing," Rizzo said.

*"While other colleges are experiencing reduction phases, we're in an expansion phase."
--Chris Rizzo
Dean of Student Affairs*

One of the other campus buildings currently experiencing the expansion phase, and whose new image should also contribute to a more positive perception of the school itself, is the Nick Building.

"The \$460,000 required to fund the Nick project came from a grant by the National Science Association, with matching funds from the University.

Maintenance Supervisor, Lucien Lawson has been involved with the Nick project since he contributed to the original designs over a year ago, and continues to participate by overseeing the construction work for quality and accuracy.

Lawson says so far, the renovations have entailed lots of initial demolition, the installation of new walls, plumbing, and electrical systems, and the addition of new research labs for the Science Department.

Pending additional funding, work and renovations on the north side of the facility, according to Assistant Provost and Senior Associate Dean, Dr. Jack Burke.

"We like to modernize our facilities whenever we can find funding," Burke said.