

Computer problems

by Anthony Kerlin
Guest Columnist

Every semester the University requires that a student pay a computer fee. Last year the fee was \$50. They raised it this year. Okay, so nothing can be done about that, right?

Although students have already paid exorbitant tuition, and some might argue that should include the access to University computer labs as part of the tuition cost, an additional fee is charged. Why is that so?

Let us look at it from the University leader's point of view. First, I am sure that they would look at the word exorbitant, which I used to describe tuition costs. Then, sidestepping the issue of computer fees, the University leadership would quickly point out that the tuition is not exorbitant, which is defined as "exceeding what is usual or proper."

Many schools charge much more for tuition, and state subsidies notwithstanding, the funds are barely keeping the university system going. All right, so the tuition is comparatively decent.

Next I suppose that they could argue that the computer age is at hand, and the state of obsolescence that computer systems are quickly and frequently reaching requires a separate, and now increased, fee solely for computer system maintenance and enhancement. Most everyone would agree with that.

So MAINTAIN THEM! Enhance them! We understand and agree with the fee; it cannot be helped, so DO IT, please. That is what the fee and its increase are for, is it not? If I have missed a point for the leadership side, please let me know.

Now let us look at the problem from a student's point of view. Rarely is there enough room for all of the students who wish access to a computer in either of the Behrend labs. This is not only because they lack enough computer sites in areas not being used by classes, but also, and more importantly, because many computers are OUT OF SERVICE.

Sorry! Even when one does find that rare opportunity to plop down in front of a vacant and functioning terminal, they may just see a sign that says, "CAN'T PRINT OUT FROM THIS SIDE OF ROOM," written on a chalkboard that may be there solely for listing the day's malfunctions.

They may find that one or more of the printers are: gone, not functioning, not available from that site, out of ink, starting documents half way through the page, backed and stacked up until next Friday, will not receive the command to print 2 copies (and only prints one, causing one to have to re-access WordPerfect and wait for an additional millennium), blah-blah, blah-blah, blah-blah.

Oh, have I mentioned that a 386 is a dinosaur? Personalasaurus Frustrationus. Throw it in with the

186 and 286 and there is a chapter for a "history of science" book, specifically ancient history.

However, I have eliminated all the aforementioned problems by getting my own computer at home. Wouldn't you know it? Now I have a new set of problems.

When I use the old "PSU Dandy Dialer" and try to log onto PSU, can you guess what happens? Yes, you know; we all know! BUSY. Sorry! Sometimes I can try for hours and it is still the same: BUSY. This tells me that there is not enough capacity on the system for everyone that wants to be on it. Why is that?

Since I do not use the Behrend computers any longer except to print out documents (and there is a fee for laser printed pages), and I cannot access the system by phone, or log-on to the POP server when trying desperately to send E-mail, can the U waive the computer fee? NO? Well how about if I Pay-Per-View? That would leave some of my refund check for America On Line. I suppose that would bring in very little revenue for the U, since I can never log on.

What about the "student advisers" who are there to answer our questions. They are often, but in their defense not always, about as helpful as a sack full of rattlesnakes at a Halloween grab-bag party.

So what about that fee? May we have our money's worth, please? Otherwise, the computer fee is little more than a stealth taxation disguised as unavoidable.

Letter to the Editor: Phones in Academic

Phones. Do you realize how much we depend on them? As students we use them mainly for pleasure. Occasionally a crisis arises and we need to make an important phone call. Now, you may be thinking so what's the point to all this?

The library, I'm sure more than a few of you have noticed, does not have a campus based phone. As a matter of fact, you can't make a campus based call from a free phone in the whole Academic building. Ah, I said 'free' that is true. You can make a call from the pay phone

located by the snack machines down the hall from the library; however, if you wanted change to make that call you would have to walk to the Reed Union Building desk...adjacent to a campus phone.

Ah, there's the rub! Why not install a campus based phone outside the library and limit it to local calls only. I know there may be apprehension on the behalf of the university due to certain irresponsible individuals who feel they need to rip phones off walls. However, I submit to you that individuals who frequent the library

are already responsible in that they choose to take their studies seriously. Why not take the student body seriously when we say we have a valid need for a campus based phone in the academic building.

If you are reading this and feel that I am representing your interests for a better quality of life, show your support at the next Coffee with the Provost meeting in November. Together we can make a difference.

by Peter Lemajic



School vouchers

by Joneatra Henry
Collegian Staff

The idea of the school-voucher plan has reentered the minds of legislators. There isn't a need for a national school-voucher plan. Money for public schools should not be taken away and given to private schools. Having a national school-voucher will lead to many more problems such as re-segregation and inequality of public education.

A school-voucher is using funds from public schools to pay for private education. By using a state voucher, people can send their children to private schools. School vouchers give parents the power to choose their child's school.

Even if there were a national voucher plan, most parents could not even use it. A lot of states are offering school choice programs that offer poor and working class parents the power to choose their children's school. But these programs only offer partial funds. Where is a poor family supposed to get the rest of the money. I believe school choice will even put a strain on the working class income the same way college does.

If poor families can't afford the other half of the cost, then their children won't be able to use the program. This will lead to only upper middle class and rich white people being able to use the program. The voucher is a way for people with money to avoid sending their children to school with other poor children. It is not only a way to separate social class but also race.

Upper class families will be able to avoid the public schools, while public education suffers because money is taken away. For each student that attends a choice school, money will be deducted from the public school budget.

Most schools are private for religious reasons. A voucher plan would compel taxpayers to support sectarian private schools, although they have a right not to be taxed for the support of religious institutions. The plan tries to give the impression that tax money is aid to children though their parent and not to the schools.

The voucher would allow dismissal of any student who is deriving no substantial academic benefits.

Coming from an inner city public school, where the education may have been less equal, how would one expect a child to excel in a private school.

Because money is taken away from the public system, some schools may be encouraged to form private schools. In the long run, the plan would transfer money from the needy to the wealthy.

Parents feel there is a need for a voucher plan to help their children receive a good education. But a voucher is not the answer. Taking money and children out of public schools is not solving the problem. What about the children who can't attend a choice school? Are they to suffer with inadequate education?

More money should be spent on public education to provide better facilities and teachers. Public schools deserve to have the best

textbooks and acquire a good reputation. I attended public schools all my life, although I had the chance to attend a private as a token blank.

The answer is not to take a child out of the public school, but to become more involved in the public education system. If parents take the initiative and make sure their children are being well educated daily then the failure rate of students would decrease.

If parents want to push for any type of school legislation, they should push for equal education in private and public schools. Public school is different for everyone. Admission to a public can't be denied because of economic status, race, or religion.

Private schools aren't for everyone. Just like any other private institution they have the right to discriminate. Because a parent lacks the money for a private school their child should not be denied equal education. Just because public education is free, the quality of education should not be less than the quality of private education.

Voucher programs will abandon the "bad" public school, giving white children the leeway to abandon the public school system. All parents face the challenge of securing a decent education for their child. Parents place too much responsibility on the school as the primary source of education. Education should first come at home. And when failure occurs, the parent should first look at the child not the public school.

Math for Biology

By Jason Simmons
Collegian Staff

I can only think of one thing to complain about this week--Math (evil music in the background). I am a third semester biology major who is forced to learn the under-appreciated washer and disc methods.

Veterinary medicine is my perceived goal, so why must I be forced to endure the evil doings of calculus? I'd much rather learn the enzymatic steps of glycolysis which holds importance to my career, than those silly letters with those evil numbers written above them. To paraphrase a friend's question, why must you learn

derivatives in order to stick a thermometer up a dog's rear end? If there is a reason why, then our universe is in deep trouble.

Calculus 140 was the inhibitor of dean's list last semester and could do a great job of torture this semester. There are others like myself, who despise calculus because it lowers their GPA despite the fact that it holds no career importance to them. Am I going into research? Nah, no money in that. I guess I'll have to blow up the world because I must take calculus anyway.

In theory, we could end this injustice to biology majors and others who have the same problem. I could become the merry pied piper

with pointed ears and stupid shoes who could lead us to victory against the evil kingdom of calculus located in (surprise) Erie.

We could march out of the woods singing and dancing la la la la la la as merry elves in an enchanted forest filled with fairies and fauns, centaurs and lots of women (OK, men for the ladies). We would declare our rebellion against the great castle on the mountain shaped like those damn parabolas. We would lay siege to the castle. We would throw x's and y's, and exponentiate them to make them ever so more large and deadly. Calculus won't help the besieged now, so the battle would be ours.

The election

By Jeremy Sloan
Guest Columnist

Well folks, it's election time again. Those of us who voted in the 1992 election might feel a vague sense of deja-vu, and with good reason. The Democrats are still calling the GOP a bunch miserly old coots, and the Republicans are still calling the Democrats a bunch of bleeding-heart liberals.

The "family values" debate has returned as "Judeo-Christian principles," and "character," still means bedroom behavior. Clinton's military record has again come under fire, and questions concerning Dole's age and health mirror similar concerns about Bush in the '92" race.

Beyond the hype and mud-slinging, where do the candidates stand? Here's what I've gathered by weeding through the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debate transcripts.

Abortion: Despite the traditional party standing, Dole has shied away from strict opposition to all abortions and has instead focused upon "partial-birth (late second and third trimester) abortions."

Clinton holds to the Democratic Party line, and would sign legislation against partial-birth abortions if rape and incest victims were excluded from the ban.

Drugs: Clinton has come under heavy fire for the increase in juvenile drug use during his term, and has pledged to devote more resources to combating drug use. He has not, however, outlined a specific plan beyond "putting 100,000 more police on the streets."

Dole has denied sympathy toward tobacco manufacturers, and repeatedly aimed replies on the matter toward Clinton's drug policies.

Education: Dole has been criticized for his past vote against

the formation of the Department of Education, and keeps to the Republican Party's traditional laissez-faire attitude toward educational funding.

Clinton promises additional moneys for education, though his earlier measures have failed to pass Congress.

Economics: Both candidates have avoided the topics of Medicare and Social Security reform, and each has accused the other of policies which would compromise

these programs.

Both candidates agree on the need for a balanced budget, but the preferred method for achieving one differs. Dole proposes a straight 15% over the board tax cut. Clinton advocates a heavy tax deduction for families with college students, and tax breaks for those buying homes.

In conclusion, for the candidates have stayed fairly close to the traditional party lines, straying only in the face of overwhelming voter consensus. For that majority willing to consider only major party candidates, traditional party politics will likely determine this November's choice.

Editor's Corner

In the spirit of the upcoming election the editors of the paper are making their choice for President know to encourage the student body to vote.

Sheila- undecided. She's undecided because she believes neither of the candidates has said anything important enough to deserve her vote. She'll have a hard time making up her mind in the end.

Danielle is undecided also. She has been following the campaigns for a research project, but that seems to have made the decision more difficult. She feels that both Clinton and Dole have neglected college students, while Perot is not even a factor in the race.

Colleen, Jen, Chad, and Doreen are voting for Clinton for the same

reasons. Dole's age is a dividing factor. He's too old to understand the generation X'ers. Clinton because he is closer in age seems to be more in tune with the youth of America.

Matt is voting for Ross Perot because "Dole is really old." Also Matt would like to see third party politics become important.

We all believe that voting is important. You know the reasons.

In the paper recently, all sides of the political race have been covered from Clintonomics to the Communist party. We have tried to give you a diverse reading to make the choice easier. We hope you took the time to read the columns. If you didn't, and you didn't watch the debates, and you don't ever watch the news you are in trouble.

This year is probably the closest race we've had in a while. The choice may come down to the arbitrary. For instance, pointing out Dole's age as a reason not to vote for him is a little bit trite. However, it is what has made our choice definitive.

Can Dole understand our generation? Will he introduce or sign legislation that is in our benefit?

No. We don't feel that he will represent us when other older voters are against us. He doesn't earn our vote. Don't misunderstand. We like Dole. His war record is impressive, and we sympathize with him, but he is fifty years older than most of the students on this campus. He's your great grandfather.

Vote your conscience, and hope for a good four years.

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