

# Dr. Burke speaks on student retention

by Abigail Mouyard  
staff writer

Ever hear of a senior survey? Around graduation time, seniors are surveyed on why they stayed at Behrend to finish their degree and what kept them from transferring to a different college. Behrend has many qualities that seem to retain students. Aside from having small classes and personable faculty, Penn State Behrend has many programs to help students along the journey of getting a degree.

Dr. Jack Burke, Senior Associate Provost and Dean recommends that students look at the Student Handbook to find the wealth of resources available at Behrend. According to the 1996-97 student handbook, "The Career Development Center assists students in the process of career planning, career development, and life planning." Campus Ministry at

Behrend is a program that provides worship opportunities to students, assisting in spiritual growth throughout one's four years at Behrend. An example is Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), which provides a friendly atmosphere to learn and worship. The Child Care Center is another convenience Behrend offers its students. The handbook states, "The Child Care Center provides quality services for children of faculty, staff, students, and the Erie community."

Behrend also has counseling services for those students who may need help making adjustments in their social, personal and academic lives. "The personal counselor offers individual counseling and support groups for those students who may occasionally feel a need to explore their various options and/or stressors in a confidential, non-

threatening environment. The Learning Assistance Center is a free tutorial service available to all students. Peer and faculty tutors assist students on an individual basis in understanding classroom lectures and responding to assignments."

Another incentive for staying at Behrend to finish a degree are the new facilities and programs that will be appearing soon on Behrend's campus. According to Burke, Knowledge Park, which is a partner to the Greater Erie Industrial Development Corporation, will develop on Behrend's property in a park-like setting with knowledge based companies to recruit students from Behrend to work in the Erie area. Burke went on to say that there will be opportunities for Behrend students to work here while attending college. Knowledge Park is an outreach mission to serve economic

development in this region.

Dr. Burke reiterated that Penn State Behrend is a "small college with a big degree." Because of Behrend's small, intimate classroom settings and its variety of majors, programs, and activities, students receive the best of both worlds on this campus.

letters to  
the editor

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## Police And Safety REPORT:

03/21/98 Found cigarette urn at south entrance to Lawrence Hall was tipped over and rolled down the stairs.

03/21/98 Complainant requested her husband be asked to call home regarding a death in the family. Was able to locate the individual and deliver the message.

03/22/98 Complainant escorted a student from downtown Wesleyville to campus. The student was intoxicated and of age. Complainant wanted to make sure student arrived safely which he did and was very thankful.

03/22/98 Complainant stated there was no power to the dryers on the third floor east of Niagara. Housing was notified.

03/22/98 Complainant reported a volleyball player had run into the wall resulting in a head injury. Had transported to St. Vincent Heath Center.

# Local members of Congress address student concerns

## Sen. Rick Santorum criticizes student aid programs

by Ayodele Jones  
staff writer

On Tuesday March 10, students who attended the PolSc 297D class to Washington, D.C., were afforded the opportunity to sit in on a Pennsylvania state briefing with United States Senator Rick Santorum. Members of various Pennsylvania interest groups in Washington were also invited to attend the briefing. During the hour long meeting, various issues were addressed: government surpluses, social security, credit unions and student aid.

Of all the issues discussed, student aid was the most hotly debated. This was mostly because the audience included students from The University of Pittsburgh, Temple University and other Pennsylvania colleges. A student from Temple University asked Santorum whether he would be in favor of decreasing student interest rates on loans and eradicating the origination fees that banks charge. Santorum adamantly said he would not support any such motion in Congress. He also argued against increasing government grants and tax breaks to students, because universities and colleges take these government increases as an opportunity to increase tuition. "If schools see that the federal government

is giving students more money, tuition rates will escalate" said Santorum. The "spiral" of increases in aid and tuition will eventually have to stop because there will be a point of saturation.

Students argued that Santorum was being unfair because he could not possibly understand the viewpoint from which they were coming. A student from the University of Pittsburgh stated that he would probably have to declare "bankruptcy" once he finished his education because of the large mass of loans he will have to repay. Santorum responded: "I owed \$32,000 when I got out of law school and I wouldn't let myself default. The problem with society is 'victimization', a victim of poverty etc. Bankruptcy is the easy way out, don't default on your loans."

A student upset with Santorum's position on student aid stormed out of the briefing saying "See you on election day." Santorum replied nonchalantly "looking forward to it."

Santorum agreed with the recent Supreme Court decision about credit unions. He tends to lean towards big banks. "Credit unions are great, they want to act as banks but they don't want to be regulated as banks. Credit unions are designed to serve a niche, now they want to go outside that niche, and I

have a problem with that" said Santorum.

Another issue that Santorum is interested in is Social Security. Santorum may support a means test for social security. "How we transition social security will be important to the future of young people." The reasons why Social Security is becoming bankrupt are that people are living longer; in the year 2011, 1.6 million baby boomers will turn sixty-five. This will eventually quadruple the number of elderly in the United States. In order to "save" the state of Social Security as we know it, Santorum suggests raising the retirement age and privatization of some aspects of Social Security programs.

He also encourages younger people to put money aside in a retirement account so that it can compound over time. Rick Santorum answered as many questions possible without pandering to the audience's points of view. He stood firm on the issues he believed in, despite the fact that a majority of the audience disagreed with his position on certain policies. The briefing allowed Pennsylvania state residents to question one of the two Senators they sent to Congress to represent their various views.

## Rep. Phil English discusses public policy with Behrend students



U.S. Rep. Phil English of Erie speaks to a group of Behrend students in a Ways and Means Committee room in Washington DC.

by Ayodele Jones  
staff writer

On Thursday March 12, 1998, students who attended the trip to Washington D.C. were able to meet with U.S. Representative Phil English. English represents Northwest Pennsylvania's 21st District which includes Erie, Mercer, Crawford and Butler counties. English is the first freshman Republican to serve on the House Ways and Means Committee in thirty years. This committee is responsible for all tax policy, trade, health, social security and welfare. The House Ways and Means Committee spends 60% of the national budget. English divides his time between his appointments on the Committee on Science, the Small Business Committee and the Ways and Means Oversight and Human Resources subcommittees, and he is regarded as one of the hardest working legislators. English states that "he would like to have a significant role on the committee but he doesn't want to make it a career."

English plans to concentrate on representing the four counties of Pennsylvania. He has no desire to reach for the White House because he states that "The House of Representatives is a terrific role for me." In terms of campaigning for office, English does not desire to get involved in further negative campaigning, he would prefer to

discuss issues that really matter to his constituents.

Students were given the opportunity to ask Representative English questions on an array of topics. On the issue of student aid English said "he would like tax advantages for people who make the best investments of all, education for yourself and family." In contrast to Senator Rick Santorum, English would also like to see more money for Pell grants, because these grants give a greater incentive for students to attend colleges and universities in the state of Pennsylvania. He also wishes to expand the TAP program for the people of Pennsylvania. English is in favor of states having more responsibilities in aspects of welfare reform. He argues that states can be more effective than one entire federal unit. Increased state participation in welfare would allow for greater state flexibility because each individual state can set qualifiers for their welfare programs.

In relation to privatizing social security, English doesn't think that pure privatization would work. He does agree that personal retirement accounts do have potential. "It is important to find a solution because we must protect the interests of those depending on the system, those close to retirement age. A poll found that more twenty-somethings believe in UFO's than the fact of receiving Social Security benefits."



Sen. Santorum is surrounded by Behrend students on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

photos courtesy of Dr. Robert Speel