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Students' Bill of Rights in first stages

by Ik Chan Kang
news editor

In our society today, we as citizens are provided with protections that enable us to stand up for our rights. Many student organizations and Student Government Association (SGA) members are putting their full effort to provide rights to students at Penn State. The initial strategy these members have taken in giving support to the student body is by promoting a "Students' Bill of Rights," not only at Behrend, but for the whole Penn State community. Even though the Students' Bill of Rights is not completed at the present time, their initial attempt is well into the first stages. So exactly what is the Students' Bill of Rights?

Right I
Every University student has the right to express his/her own individual diversity, not limited to, but including age, ancestry, color, disability, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation or veteran status.

Right II
The educational and social environment of the University shall be comfortable and inviting to all students and free of any acts of prejudice, both inside and outside the classroom.

Right III
Academic equality is guaranteed to all students regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation or veteran status. No student should be expected to represent the views, thoughts and opinions of the group.

Right IV
Students shall have the freedom from any type of abuse, be it verbal, physical, or written of any form due to his/

her individual diversity.

Right V
Conflicts shall be handled by the appropriate campus committee immediately and in an expedient manner so as not to deprive the student of an environment conducive to learning. Students have the right to get a conflict resolved and to not have it interfere with his/her learning experience.

Right VI
Every student has the right to designated safe-havens, at each campus, where help can be found free from intolerance, and where he/she does not have to fear discrimination and can freely express his/her individual diversity.

Right VII
Ongoing improvements in the Pennsylvania State University's opposition to intolerance and continued evaluation of course material and programming to promote the diversity of all students both in the classrooms and all programs at the University.

There have been several controversial arguments made about these rights by both members of SGA and school administrators. For instance, the words "individual diversity" lead to the question, where and how should a student be placed under this broad category? All people are diverse in the sense that they originate from different places, so how should we distinguish among 'diverse' students? Also, by promoting these rights of students in ambiguous wording, the potential of bringing legal problems, such as lawsuits, cannot be ignored. These were some of the primary reasons why the CCSG (Council of Commonwealth Student Governments) has revised it a few times, and many more revisions are still to come.

Approximately six times a year, the Student Government Associations from all the PSU commonwealth campuses gather at University Park for periodic meetings. At these meetings, issues such as networking, updating, activity fees, and many others are usually brought up. In the Spring of 1996, CCSG at University Park started to draft the Students' Bill of Rights.

Jennifer Fontecchio, the current secretary of Behrend's Multi-Cultural Council, was one of the first members who got involved with the draft-

ing. Fontecchio states, "our original intents for promoting the Students' Bill of Rights were that it was to act as a statement that gives protection of rights and secondly we have noticed that in our campus literature, there was no formal document that states specific rights for students." She agrees with the fact that some of wording in the Students' Bill of Rights is controversial and it might potentially bring lawsuits, but she firmly states that this is not a completed issue.

She added, "I agree with it. I don't

agree with some of the phrasing. If it was to be adapted as a formal literature, I really don't want students to use the advantage in a wrong way. The idea of it was to acknowledge students' rights. For example, in terms of student services such as the health and wellness center, some of the students on other campuses don't have any access to these facilities. They have to find them in their own way. What is the use of a nurse visiting once a week on, let's say Thursday, if you are sick on Monday? Also, there are several other campuses where

there is no career advising center within the campus. Having a career advising center is a reasonable thing. How are rights of students being protected here?"

Fontecchio believes that it will be a while until students will see the actual formal documents being passed out to students in our campus, since it was only a short time ago that Graham Spanier, the President of the Pennsylvania State University, was informed about the Students' Bill of Rights. A positive thing, however, is that in some of the other commonwealth campuses, it is already implemented into SGA documents and then student handbook. Fontecchio added, "We got positive feedback from our own administration, too. But I am quite sure that the process will take a while, since approval has to come through Graham Spanier to Faculty Senate then to the Student Affairs Office, which then goes to the corresponding committees. I don't see it happening in a semester's time, but it will eventually appear at Behrend in one way or the other."

Even though the controversial process of establishing the Students' Bill of Rights is not concluded yet, Behrend's student-organized groups, such as MCC, along with student organized groups in other commonwealth campuses have taken a great step forward. Fontecchio concluded by stating, "Don't forget students have rights. I would advise students who are having problems (with any aspects of school) to seek the proper help. If you are not satisfied with it, you should go beyond to find that satisfying place. You pay the student activity fees and you pay tuition. You have the right to have right academics and right services."



photo by Jason Blake

Jennifer Fontecchio, Secretary of MCC, is an advocate of the Students' Bill of Rights.

Library gallery presents SGA to hold Behrend history elections

One in a series of articles on Behrend's 50th Anniversary

Voting to occur Tuesday, Wednesday

by Andrea Zaffino
editor in chief

With the fiftieth anniversary of the Behrend College coming up in what is now just a few months, it is apparent that many of the students and even some faculty and staff know little about the history of this campus and the family that founded it. Another thing of which many people are un-

aware on this campus is that obtaining information about the campus history is readily available to them.

Anybody who has ever walked into the Behrend Library has noticed the small gallery to the right of the entrance doors. It displays various artifacts from the Behrend family's history. There is a bust of Moritz Behrend, a painting of Ernst Behrend,

and a painting of Norman H. Wilson, who was Hammerrill Paper Company's second president and an honorary Chairman of the Board, among other people important to Behrend's and Hammerrill's past. There are drawings and blueprint sketches of the Paper Company's design.

The Army/Navy "E" flag was

awarded to Hammerrill by the United States Department of War. It was an award given to those production plants that attained an excellent level in manufacturing and distributing war-related goods during the second world war. It was very prestigious and given out on a rather competitive basis. Hammerrill contributed to the war effort by supplying paper which the Army and Navy used for forms, orders, maps and blueprints.

One of the professors who spearheaded the work done to this gallery was Dr. John Rossi, Assistant Professor of History. He was asked to research the historical backgrounds and descriptions of the portraits and the artifacts within the gallery, due to his being a twentieth century historian. Dr. Sharon Dale, Associate Professor of Art History, was in charge of the layout of the room. Dr. Rossi, Lynne Weber from Development and University Relations and student Chris Duine were assigned to work on it.

In the basement of the Otto Behrend Science building many of these artifacts and paintings were being stored in cardboard boxes and at the end of winter when the snow was melting, the boxes were being leaked on. Rossi said, "Chris Duine, Lynn Weber and myself made arrangements to move the records and portraits to a safer, drier location."

When the library opened in 1993, the room where the artifacts and portraits are now was put in especially for that reason. It is actually called the Gallery Room.

by Andrea Zaffino
editor in chief

Spring semester is about to come to a close and preparation for next year is underway. Next week on Tuesday and Wednesday the 21st and 22nd between 11:00 and 2:00 the changes taking place for SGA will be decided by the students of Behrend. Preparation for the SGA elections is currently in full swing.

There are 17 candidates total competing for the eleven positions of SGA senator. The positions for Secretary, Vice President and President however will be less of a challenge with only one candidate running to fill each of those positions. Michelle Benjamin is running for her second term as SGA Secretary. Both

is not going to be the same without him there in some capacity."

The candidates for Senator began publicizing their campaigns last Monday, April 13th. As of that morning the candidates were permitted to hang signs advertising their campaigns. There are official posting policies that require compliance. No more than sixty posters for any event and the guideline for the Reed Union Building is around twenty five signs. However the rule has been taken somewhat loosely by some of these running. "Charles [Testrake] is wall papering these buildings!" Bucholtz said of one aspiring candidate. Charles Testrake is one of the two people running who held a Senatorial position this past year, the other is

"They have a lot on their plates and don't have enough time to devote the attention to it that it needs."

Christa Bucholtz
SGA senator and Chair of the Elections Committee

Andrea DiPlacido who is running for Vice President and Buck Goedicke, the sole candidate for President are running are together on their first ticket.

The current SGA President, Michael Zampetti and Vice President, Tim Smith, will not be running for any of next year's positions. Christa Bucholtz SGA senator and Chair of the Elections Committee said of the two nonreturning officers, "They have a lot on their plates and don't have enough time to devote the attention to it that it needs." Bucholtz went on to say about Zampetti, "I'm very disappointed that he's not running, SGA

freshman Senator, Julie Meyers.

Students are encouraged to stop out in front of Bruno's Cafe anytime between 11:00 and 2:00 on Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and voice their opinion on who should fill these positions. It is also apparent that anyone voting, bring their student ID to verify their student number making certain no one votes more than once.

The winners will be announced Wednesday the 22nd at 5:30 during the SGA meeting, and posted outside the SGA office in the bottom floor of the Reed Union Building the following Thursday morning.



photo by Jason Blake

Portraits of the Behrend family line the walls of the library gallery.