

## Engineering program receives accreditation

by Justin Plansinis  
staff writer

Penn State Erie has a well-deserved reputation as an excellent school for students interested in engineering and engineering technology. People from around the world come to the Behrend College because of our respectability as a top engineering school. As further proof of our campus's quality and standards, Penn State Erie's engineering program recently earned accreditation from the ABET.

The ABET, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Engineering Technology, is engineering's premier academic accrediting organization. Accreditation means that the school has met certain standards laid out by the ABET. Essentially, accreditation lets employers know that graduates come from a good school.

Behrend's computer engineering program received its initial EAC-ABET accreditation. EAC stands for Engineering Accreditation Commission, and it is a part of the ABET. The electrical engineering and mechanical engineering programs at Penn State Behrend were re-accredited having already received accreditation in previous years.

The Engineering Accreditation Commission was pleased with the faculty, administrative support, facilities and student achievement in our engineering programs," said Dr. Robert Simoneau, director of the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology. With accreditation we assure our students that they are receiving the highest quality teaching and learning in the electrical, mechanical and computer engineering programs.

Behrend's engineering program earning accreditation is good news for all engineering students. Prospective employers are always interested in whether job seekers come from an accredited institution. In some cases, state licensing boards and certification programs

may require graduation from an ABET-accredited program as the first step in the registration or certification process for professional practice.

Currently, the software engineering program is the only engineering program without accreditation; however, this is not the fault of the college. Accreditation can only be earned once students have graduated from the program. Since the software engineering major is so new, no students have graduated from it yet.

Software engineers need not be concerned, however, because once they graduate and accreditation is earned, the school is usually accredited for the year before the year of actual accreditation. Hence, if a student graduates in 2003 and the accreditation is given in 2004, the student graduated from an accredited institution.

Penn State Behrend's electrical, mechanical and plastics engineering technology programs are also accredited by ABET, their most recent re-accreditation having occurred in 2001.

ABET is composed of four commissions that grant accreditation in the areas of applied science, computing, engineering and technology. Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental process of peer review that requires an educational institution or program to meet defined standards.

In some cases, accreditation can even help students receive federal funds such as scholarships, loans, and grants.

With Penn State Behrend being an accredited college as well as campus of a respected state school, engineering students should be very marketable upon graduation. Even though Behrend's reputation for engineering is well known, it is nice to have the figures to back up the claim. Engineering students at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, can rest assured that their course of study is among the best in the United States.

## SGA legislative wrap-up

### Homecoming Support

Discussion was heard for 10 minutes on whether or not SGA should sponsor the Ohio Hall Council homecoming. Senators voiced their concerns on the validity of the organization, the timing of the event and the similarities to the Mr. and Ms. Penn State Behrend pageant. Other students voiced their support for the event, stating that it will bring more school spirit to campus and giving examples of how hard the council has been working on the event. The motion passed in the senate, with the stipulation that there not be a King and Queen competition associated with homecoming, fearing that it would infringe upon the Mr. and Ms. Penn State Behrend pageant.

### JRC Ambiguity

Legislation was submitted by the executive board as to the state of the hall councils, including JRC. Currently, the hall councils are not recognized as active clubs by SGA, but still must complete budget and treasury training. It was the consensus of the executive board that the hall councils become subsidiaries of JRC. This will be more constructive for both SGA and JRC, especially during budget time. In the past, SGA would allocate a lump sum of money to the hall councils. Under the new legislation, JRC would have to submit a budget to SGA including itemized reports and quotes for all activities. Discussion was limited to 10 minutes, and the legislation was tabled for two weeks.

### Keg Tagging Legislation

SGA voted to support new keg tagging legislation proposed by state Rep. Linda Bebeko-Jones. This legislation helps enforce the prosecution of adults who purchase kegs for consumption by minors. Kegs will now have barcodes on them, which will be scanned on site, thus making it easier to prosecute the individuals that purchase the kegs.

### Treasury Reallocations

Two treasury reallocations were brought before the senate, one from Volleyball Club and the other from Lacrosse Club. The Volleyball club's allocation was to move \$50 from recruitment to a tournament and failed in the senate. The Lacrosse club's allocation was to move approximately \$500 from a tournament to equipment and passed in the senate.

## What is THON?

by Brendan C. Quinn  
Collegian columnist

"Why are you guys doing this anyway?"

Anyone who has ever canned for dance marathon has undoubtedly heard this question posed by a passer-by on a busy intersection. Why would a bunch of selfish college students give up their weekends to stand on a street corner on a cold day in the middle of February, hustling for spare change?

"What are you really spending that money on? Beer? Ha, Ha!"

Anyone who has asked for money from people for Thon has probably heard this question from some wise-ass driving a Mercedes on that same freezing street corner. That is really what these college kids are doing, right? They're taking this money under the guise of helping cancer and spending it on cheap gin and low-level narcotics, right?

"You're gonna do what?"

Anyone who has ever danced in Thon has certainly heard this question from someone in the weeks leading up to Thon. What are these same college students then torturing their bodies for during 48 straight hours on a different weekend?

"Thon? What the hell does that mean?"

Anyone who has worn any clothing with the word "Thon" on it has probably gotten that very question. What kind of people make up their own word for an event and expect people to understand what they are talking about?

Questions, questions, questions. It seems that the weeks leading up to Thon are a veritable Q&A session for nearly everyone involved in Thon. Why so many questions? It's pretty simple actually. Thon is selfless. And no one seems to understand selflessness. So after my long weekend of dancing at Thon this year, I will try to state everything that Thon has become to me during the last four years.

Thon is a year-long event. Thon is about learning who you are, and what is important to you. Thon is a commitment. Thon is motivating unmotivated people.

Thon is soliciting. Thon is asking your family to help out these kids. Thon is going door to door. Thon is seeing a "No Soliciting" sign on front doors and not getting discouraged.

Thon is getting a \$100 donation from someone you have never met before. Thon is getting the door slammed in your face at the next house. Thon is people asking you to come inside from the cold while they fill out a pledge.

Thon is canning. Thon is a mass exodus from this campus with carloads of people going out to raise money in far away towns on canning weekends.

Thon is packing too many people in a house with not enough beds. Thon is staying up late and getting up early. Thon is a busy intersection. Thon is dodging traffic to get

the elusive \$5 bill. Thon is the new BMW that passes you by and the 1978 Dodge Dart that gives you \$1. Thon is loving the feeling of a can getting heavy with money in your freezing hands. Thon is eating fast food during breaks from the cold. Thon is getting kicked off of an intersection by a reluctant cop. Thon is counting thousands of dollars in small bills and change after a long day of canning.

Thon is people. Thon is why you don't see some people for a few weeks. Thon is what they are doing. Thon is the overall captains, who sacrifice more time and effort in one year than most do in a lifetime. Thon is people on the morale committee, who are willing to try to uplift complete strangers. Thon is what we really mean when we say, "We are Penn State."

Thon is dancing. Thon is meeting people. Thon is the line dance. Thon is playing catch with a football for four straight hours. Thon is people you don't know putting stickers on you and making you happy. Thon is hearing Rob Base's "It Takes Two" and going crazy. Thon is feeling like a little kid again.

Thon is pain. Thon is wanting to sleep. Thon is periods of boredom. Thon is Rec Hall feeling like the size of a closet at times. Thon is your feet feeling like someone has hit them with a hammer. Thon is wanting to give up but knowing that you can't.

Thon is the children. Thon is the spirit in these kids. Thon is the smile on a child's face. Thon is seeing a child with a bald head and a big smile who makes you feel guilty for complaining your feet hurt. Thon is the Hershey Medical Center. Thon is the chemotherapy treatments that make these kids cry.

Thon is the best doctors and nurses in the country comforting them. Thon is families who suffer so much during the year. Thon is hearing their stories. Thon is the tears that you can't hold back. Thon is these families thanking you for your help. Thon is what these kids look forward to all year.

Most of all, though, Thon is seeing real heroes.

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