

Caps and gowns bring reality of graduation to life

by Lauren Packer
editor in chief

Students planning to graduate on May 15 took one of the few remaining steps this week en route to receiving their diplomas.

On Monday and Tuesday, the reality of graduation started to sink in as those intending to graduate purchased caps and gowns, announcements, class rings and received their family tickets.

Steph Covert, PHYS 08, will be just one of two physics majors to earn a diploma this spring.

"Only 39 more days left until graduation," Covert said Tuesday. "It seems like such a long time. But then again, as a freshman, four years of college seemed like a long time. I have no idea where the time went in those years."

One of the biggest challenges that still looms for soon-to-be graduates isn't finishing projects or passing finals, said one senior. Instead, most are worried about finding extra tickets other than the six university-allotted family tickets.

Covert, a first-generation college graduate on her maternal family side, sees herself in dire need of tickets.

"I personally need at least 10 tickets," said Covert. "What I really want to know is how they came up with the number six? Even if I had to buy the extra tickets, I would."

Victoria Anderson, COMBA 08, began her quest for extra tickets immediately after receiving hers. "Any of you guys have extra tickets?" she asked to the other seniors waiting in line to purchase caps and gowns.

Anderson's questions may have drawn laughter from the crowd, but all seemed to share her pain and worries about not getting enough tickets for family.

"I'm getting my family in there," Anderson said. "I don't care."

With roughly fewer than four weeks of classes, the seniors at the Senior Salute Days were bombarded with some important choices. Donate to the class gift? Order announcements? What about a class ring?

Bob Hoover, an announcement representative from Balfour's, explained why most students choose to send announcements.

"Old Grandma's always good for a check," chuckled Hoover. "But seriously, it's about the parents and their

pride. Students haven't been through life to understand the pride of children. And besides, you do actually get money back from these, depending on how rich your friends and relatives are."

"My parents want a formal way of letting my relatives know," said Anderson. "I think a simple phone call would have worked, but I guess it's all about the glitz and glamour."

Tony Cecchini, POLSC/HIST 10, described the announcements as "unnecessary." "I'm not willing to take on any more expenses," said Cecchini. "I don't think my parents would care either way anyhow."

The price of some of the accessory items at the salute days turned Covert away from buying most things.

"I really liked the one ring they had, but I can't afford to pay \$300 when Penn State has already sucked everything out of me. If I would have bought a ring and announcements, in addition to my cap and gown, I would have spent close to \$500 today."

Anderson agreed the rings were a bit expensive, but she had another reason for not purchasing one.

"I would really rather purchase a ring from the graduate school I earn a diploma from."

The Jostens representative could not directly comment on any aspect of class rings because company procedures prohibit it.

One item that was "free" for the students came from the table with a miniature Nittany Lion statue. Here students were encouraged to donate all or a portion of the \$100 deposit paid as a freshman to the senior class gift. The gift will be a life-size statue of the Nittany Lion, like the one found at University Park.



Students wait patiently in line to buy caps and gowns for their upcoming graduation day.

H&SS Director, continued

a lengthening of a radio program Aquila wrote, hosted, and produced for National Public Radio from 1998 until 2000 called "Rock and Roll America." This program was syndicated all over the United States, and even parts of Europe, and Aquila considers it one of his best achievements.

"The NPR series was one of the most interesting projects I have ever done. Having the opportunity to interview most of the pioneers from rock 'n' roll's first decade was a dream come true – not just from the perspective of a kid from south Buffalo who grew up on the music," he said, "but also from the perspective of a professional historian trying to explain the cultural significance of the music."

Aquila's music tastes center around rock 'n' roll but as a historian, he has to listen to all music equally. When asked, he couldn't really come up with a "favorite" band or song.

"It sort of depends on my mood – I listen to everything from Buddy Holly to Eric Andersen, from Springsteen to Steve Earle, from Brenda Lee to Alison Krauss, with an occasional Bach or rap thrown in for good measure," Aquila mused. "As a music fan, I have a few favorites; but as a cultural historian I explore everything, since all of popular

culture tells us something about the times."

Aquila isn't sure about what kinds of classes he plans on teaching at Behrend yet, but if past experience is any indication, whatever he chooses to teach should be interesting. During his career, Aquila has taught History of American Pop Culture classes, a class known as "The American West," a Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society class and a class known as "America in the 1960s." As to whether or not any of those classes would be making the trip back east with him, Aquila wasn't sure.

And for students who wonder what kind of professor Aquila will be, here, in 31 words, is his description of his teaching style: "Socratic. I like to mix lectures with lots of discussions. I want students to come away not just with a knowledge of facts, but also an understanding of concepts and issues."

Aquila does have one question for students, figuring we were the most qualified to answer it. It's a very important one, and he would truly like to know before he starts at Behrend.

"Last, but not least, I have a question for all of you: Where's the best pizza in town?"

Free HIV testing available to students

by Atheia Mobley and
Theo Shomsky
contributing writers

Chances are, if you are a Behrend student and have a bladder, you've seen the Health and Wellness Center flyers for confidential HIV testing in bathroom stalls around the campus. However, for many students, the idea of getting tested leaves their minds as quickly as it enters. What students fail to see is that getting tested is a matter of life or death.

According to Patty McMahon, director and nurse practitioner of Behrend's Health and Wellness Center, early detection is the key to keeping patients infected with the HIV virus healthy.

"If the virus is there... We can help them watch their T-cells, so that when medication needs to be instituted, it can be done so."

McMahon further noted that if the virus is detected and treated early, the patient can look at HIV as more of a chronic type of disease than a life-threatening illness.

Through a grant from the Erie County Depart-

ment of Health, HIV testing on the Behrend campus is completely free. According to McMahon if a student was to get tested through their family physician, it can cost up to \$80.

The testing procedure, which happens on campus, takes less than 30 minutes and is completely confidential. The nurse simply asks a few questions and has the student sign a written consent before testing.

There are two forms of HIV tests available. A student can decide whether to take the Orasure (an oral method of testing), or have blood drawn. The Orasure may take a little longer for test results (up to three weeks), whereas the blood test is much quicker, with results arriving within two weeks.

According to McMahon, testing ends two to three weeks before finals, so that the center has time to counsel all patients about their results.

Testing is available throughout the business day at the Health and Wellness Center with three nurses certified to conduct the procedure. For more information contact McMahon at the Behrend Health and Wellness Center at 898-6217.

Deford reflects on life in sports

by Scott Soltis
assistant managing editor

Acclaimed sports writer Frank Deford spoke to students and community members Thursday night at the final installment of this year's Speaker Series. Deford detailed many of his experiences to a predominately male audience interested in hearing of his career in sports. The disproportionate distribution of gender was no surprise to Deford as he mentioned that "sports mean even more than sex to most men."

Deford told many stories of his run-ins with Muhammad Ali, Bill Russell, Jerry West, and his friend Arthur Ashe. Deford was one of the earliest to know that Ashe had developed AIDS and was chastised for keeping his word to a friend.

Deford expressed concern over the current state of sports in America throughout the evening. "The bad stuff is the easiest to believe, sadly that had become the leitmotif of our times," explained Deford.

He also spoke about collegiate athletes and wondered aloud why athletes in sports such as track

and field, golf and swimming should receive scholarships. He questioned why a tennis player should get a scholarship, but not a piano player. Later in the evening, he would again use the arts in comparison with sports. He acclaimed the surge in popularity of basketball to the fact that "basketball has sold itself as a visual art."

Deford also showed concern about parents' role in sports from the elementary to the collegiate level. He told a story about how when his daughter was very young she learned how to swim and told him that he would not have to worry about paying for college because she would get a scholarship. This elementary school age girl had heard this from another of the swimmers whose parents had already begun the cycle of pressure.

This increased emphasis on the individual has led Deford to worry about the direction team sports are going. "I feel the whole concept of team is threatened today," Deford said. He underscored this by saying that after a team loses now, the players talk about if they are going to make the highlight reel on "SportsCenter."



Frank Deford signs autographs Wednesday evening in McGarvey Commons following his speech.

Meek, Streaker, continued

feels that the chairperson was a good addition to the program, as well as the fact that the sisters had a year's experience to go on with the pageant.

"I feel that this year was a lot easier than before," said Waters. "We were able to build off of our successes from last year, and work on some things that needed worked on."

The sisters' first inclination of success came after the change wars, which were held a week ago. The first round of contestants, 20 in all, went head to head to see who would make the top 10.

Throughout the week, the sisters collected double of what they had last year, reaching over \$300.

All money raised through the event goes to the sorority's philanthropy, the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, Ky.

"This is definitely going to become an annual event at Behrend," said Waters. "We got a lot of positive feedback from last year's pageant, as well as a decent turnout."

Last year's attendance was around 100 people, and

Waters was hoping for more this year, which she received, with the majority of the Commons being packed.

Once the event was over and done with, Waters was "relieved, yet happy."

"I think that the AST sisters are awesome. They're some of the sweetest and nicest girls I've met," said Streaker. "I met the majority of them tonight, and I feel like I've known them for a while already."

Meek feels that the pageant was a great success this year. "I think that with a year under their belt, they knew were they doing," said Meek.

When asked if they had any advice for the recently crowned duo, Masilunas and Schermer offered the following advice.

"Always remember, don't hate... participate," said Masilunas.

"Live it up," said Schermer.

Streaker and Meek's titles will be upheld until next April, when they will pass them on in the third installment of the pageant.



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