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The Behrend Beacon

**The Behrend Beacon**  
*published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College*

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**THE BEHREND Beacon**  
"Professionalism with a personality"

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## We are more than just Penn State



Daniel J. Stasiewski

It's that time of year again. Caps and gowns are hanging on dorm room doors, waiting for commencement day. Finals are putting the squeeze on already drained brains. And, of course, graduating seniors are preparing to give up \$100 for the senior gift, Behrend's own Nittany lion statue.

Yep, a Nittany lion, just like the one in front of Old Main. It's a part of the university's identity, much like the way swastika was part of the Nazi identity. Now, Behrend seniors again are following the leader like good little lemmings to plant a one-ton slab of rock that resembles a fictitious mountain lion on this campus.

Granted, Behrend's Penn State affiliation has its perks. I can borrow pretty much any foreign film and indie flick on DVD from any other university library. (Behrend seems to forget the arts part of a liberal arts education, at least with respect to film.) The online journals subscriptions and speedy Internet also have their advantages.

But as far as I'm concerned, I didn't go to University Park, where the mascot is a Nittany lion. I'm at Behrend. You know, "the small college, with the big degree." Last time I checked, our mascot (pathetic as it may be) was the lion. The large feline with a mane, not the overgrown house cat. We may be Penn State, but we sure as hell aren't Nittany lions.

So why put a Nittany lion statue on our campus? Is it to remind Behrend students that there's an Oz-like univer-

sity somewhere over the rainbow that is better than the gray Behrend College because there are more bars? Or is it because there are so many UP rejects on campus that a Nittany lion statue is like the bottle of Centrum vitamins contestants not appearing on stage receive when they can't estimate cost on "The Price is Right?"

Usually I'd give a serious stab at the real motivation around this point in my column, but I just don't get it. I don't see why Behrend needs to kneel at the altar of University Park, when, let's face it, the large central Pennsylvania campus seems a tad bit concerned with little old Behrend, as it finishes the construction of one new residence hall, with another in the planning stage, to accommodate the influx of new students. I'm sure anybody in the English Department would be able to vouch for the domination through bureaucracy. The faculty behind the newly offered BFA in

creative writing, a Behrend College exclusive in the Penn State system, had to jump through more hoops than a trained dolphin at Sea World in order to get the university to accept the degree program.

If Erie city and county officials ever get their acts together, Behrend will have an even greater potential for success, success that is only limited by the bureaucrats at University Park. While I'd like to believe it matters that the certificate I'll have next year is a Penn State University degree, I'd be willing to give-up that university name-dropping up for a little bit of Behrend pride. I'm not just talking going to basketball games or wearing a shirt with PSB on it. Students should take pride in the classes, in the community and in the fact that our mascot is a lion.

Behrend is only as strong as its students. By placing a monument to something we are not on this campus, students are only showing their weakness. I may not be a senior this year, but if the same fund-raiser for a statue is still going on next April, that rock better have a mane on it. Otherwise, I'll show my strength. I'll be spending my \$100 on a wig.

Note: Creative writing program chair George Looney, who talked with me a bit about the BFA program, wanted to make sure Dr. Jack Burke received credit for his work on making the creative writing degree a reality. I, too, would like to take a moment to thank Dr. Burke for being the advocate that this campus needs to succeed.

## Think the Beacon pages need some spice?

## THEN JOIN THE TEAM

## The Beacon is looking for writers for the fall semester

## No need to join a class

## Just write as much as your schedule allows

## Express your interest by e-mailing Dan Stasiewski at djs395@psu.edu

## Make students earn a communication degree

Perhaps the hardest lesson I've had to learn during my four years at Behrend was coming to grips with the fact that my Communication and Media Studies degree is worthless.

Come May 15, I will have a degree that cost me thousands of dollars, yet have nothing to show for it.

I say this because of the current state of the Communication program. I have better than a 3.5 in my major, and a 3.6 overall. Yet, when you compare what I am able to produce to other students in the communication field, I look pathetic.

What I'm lacking is what other communication majors have: an education.

It's no wonder the Communication major is the most criticized by other students. They, along with the students in the major, see what's happening. They see that our classes and workloads are fake. It's no secret that Communication majors do little to no work. Look at our major checksheet for proof. The highest prescribed course we have to take, besides our internship, is Commu 421W. Compare that to English, which is Elish 494A or Operations Management, which is 470W.

Don't feed me the bull about students must be willing to be dedicated and work outside of the classroom. Don't



Lauren Packer  
editor in chief

feed me the bull about how our education is only as great as what effort we put forth.

I've worked with the Beacon for four semesters, serving as editor in chief for two, but it's still not enough. I belong to outside trade organizations such as the Association for Women in Communication. I've done an internship, toured newspapers and volunteered with numerous organizations.

I don't claim to be a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and I know I have many faults with my writing. But I came to Behrend with an insatiable quest for knowledge about the Communication field, ready and willing to spend the long hours crafting my

Communication skills, and received close to nothing in return.

I have learned some skills while in the Communication program, but not much. And when the editor in chief of the school's newspaper has to set the record straight because the faculty and staff have the wool pulled over their eyes, it's a shame.

To be frank, I'm not even sure I will be able to look people in the eye and tell them I graduated from college with a degree. That's how ashamed I am of my skills that I supposedly "learned" during my stay.

We want to do the work; that's why we are here. We want to learn, we want to get better. We want to learn how to perform public relations campaigns. We want to make videos and produce newspaper clips. No one says they are going to college so they can waste thousands of dollars on a bogus degree.

Faculty, rise to the challenge: make Communication and Media Studies majors earn their degree. Don't just hand it to them; it benefits no one. I'm tired of having to defend my major choice to the business majors, to the engineers, to the biology majors, to every other major on this campus. The current state of our program has left us the laughing stock of the campus.

### Letter to the Editor

It has been called to my attention that recently on campus there has been more and more people wearing Greek letters. No, these are not people who are part of the three Greek sororities, five Greek fraternities, many Honors fraternities, or Community Service fraternities, but actually they are non-Greeks who have never been recognized by the campus. It is a bit ironic that the

people who ridicule Greek life at this campus are the ones actually making up "fake frats" or wearing Greek letters. These people said they have such shirts with Greek letters, numbers, and nicknames be-

cause "they like to drink together" or to make fun of the fraternities here. They did not even know what the actual Greek letters were on their shirts. I learned that some of these shirts that people supposedly wear for drinking are an actual underground organization. I have not heard much that they do except for hazing including binge drinking, smoking weed, and etc. to "initiate" the new members. Hazing is illegal and no matter who you are, whether a Greek organization, varsity team, club sport or etc. Hazing is not allowed and in Pennsylvania it is considered a misdemeanor of the third degree. Another problem is I don't think people realize you can't put a couple Greek letters on a shirt and say you are a frat. Did you ever check and see if there was really a Greek fraternity named that al-

ready? No, I am not out to put down these people because I would be a hypocrite, but I am just trying to make a point about how everyone at this campus bashes the Greek Life here and does not really know the whole truth. I am proud to say that my organization has never "hazed" any of our new sisters and we treat our new members like equals and no not all we do is drink. We participate in a variety of philanthropies and activities on this campus and we take our academics very seriously. So next time you go to make fun of anyone on this campus you should step back and as they say "take a walk in their shoes for a day" and realize the good in them.

Natalie Lytle, BioEd, 06



SEND LETTERS

Letters must be signed and include a telephone number, major, semester standing and full name. Letters more than 350 words may be edited. Letters that are libelous or are personal attacks will not be published. Send to: The Behrend Beacon, Reed Union Building Club Mailbox, 5091 Station Rd, Erie, PA 16563. E-mail: behrcoll2@aol.com