

The Behrend Beacon

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Rockin' the Vote rocks the boat

by B.J. Shields
staff writer

A student-produced public service video was yanked in November from viewing in Bruno's Café.

The video in question was put together as a project for Dr. Ursula Davis' COMMU 405 class. As part of an overall program called Rockin' the Vote, a group from Davis' class made the video to show prior to their planned event, in hopes of promoting it to the student body.

After arranging to have the video promotion for Rockin' the Vote aired for two days in Bruno's Café, the group members looked forward to the success of their class project.

"We really just wanted to promote the event, to get people registered to vote," said Carrie Rodgers, COMMU 09.

On Monday, Rodgers approached the Office of Student Activities about scheduling the voter registration program to take place in Bruno's that Wednesday. The office approved her request, and that afternoon, the promotional video her class had prepared began showing in a continuous loop on the screen in the café.

Later that evening, Rodgers stopped by Bruno's to make further arrangements with Housing and Food Services for the set-up of the public service event. At that time, she noticed the video was not playing.

"The manager of Bruno's told us they had to stop playing the video because someone from Residence Life staff had complained," said Rodgers.

The complaint about the video took issue with a scene in which two DJs were filmed at a local tavern after one of their shows. The DJs had offered to play at the class's event free of charge, so the producers wished to include them in the promotional video.

At one point in the clip of the DJs, the liquor bottle lined shelves of the tavern appeared in the background.

"It was a two-minute section of the video, and no one was seen drinking in it," said Brooke Nix, COMMU 07, who also worked with the class on the project.

"They (the representative of Residence Life) said we were promoting the bar."

The students said they felt they were going to get in trouble with the school and said the manager of Bruno's was also fearful of disciplinary action.

Because the video was part of an assigned project

for which the class would be graded, the group approached the Office of Student Activities, offering to edit the questionable scene from the video.

"We didn't really get a straight answer, though, so it was not shown at all after that," said Rodgers.

It is unclear where school policy comes into play in the incident, however. Rodgers and Nix point out that Bruno's routinely airs football games that contain advertising and promotion of beer products. The school also supports the Beacon newspaper, which last week printed a page specifically promoting area drinking establishments and has in the past reviewed restaurants along with their respective alcoholic beverage specialties.

According to Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities and the Reed Union Building, the video was removed from viewing by Housing and Food Services (HFS), which is an independent organization.

"Housing and Food Services has the ability to manage operations of their facility," said Rizzo in an electronic communication. "The use of Bruno's for programming/event purposes has been a privilege extended by HFS in support of student life on campus."

Following the removal of the video from Bruno's, and the lack of a response from the Office of Student Activities, the class discussed at its regular meeting how the tape's removal can be viewed as censorship.

"The most frustrating thing about this whole situation is that it was an assigned class project," said Nix. "We all worked very hard putting it all together, and we weren't promoting alcohol in any way. We were promoting voter registration."

In addition to discussing the issues of censorship surrounding this chain of events in their own class, the video was also presented to one of Davis' other classes.

Consensus seemed to be that there was nothing wrong with the video and that the brief scene of the DJs was not in any way promoting alcohol consumption to the viewers. The incident raised questions in both classes as to the validity of the initial complaint against the video and whether the students who created it were being unnecessarily censored.

With most of the student population being 18 and older, the college would be wrong to think that students can not make mature decisions.

"We're adults," said Rodgers. "And besides, it's not like college students don't already drink."

Masilunas chosen as division rep

by Ray Immekus
staff writer

Senior track and field athlete Dave Masilunas was named to the Student Athlete Advisory Committee Division III Management Council in late November. He, along with Sarah Forbus, a graduate of Denison University, replaced Kary Couchman and Joshua Espinosa on the committee. Masilunas' term on the Management Council began following the National SAAC Conference in January, which will be held in Nashville, Tenn.

"Penn State Behrend is proud to have one of its own student-athletes representing the entire body of Division III," said director of athletics Brian Streeter.

"It is an honor to have Dave selected to this committee. He will be on the ground floor of planning and implementing new NCAA mandates that will continue to reform college athletics in the future."

This promotion comes only one year after Masilunas was named to the national committee. SAAC consists of 78 total members, representing all three NCAA divisions. Along with being a member of the Behrend chapter of SAAC, Masilunas is one of 28 student members who represent Division III on the national committee.

"Last year I went from team SAAC representative to national representative in the span of like three months," said Masilunas. "It was kind of like a culture shock going to the national convention and being thrown into the lions' den of all these athletic directors from across the country coming up and shaking my hand and asking me for my opinion on different matters."

Masilunas' promotion was somewhat of a spur-of-the-moment action. Espinosa decided to step down from his position on Management Council because his full-time job was stopping him from fulfilling his duties for the NCAA. That's when Masilunas decided to put himself up for election. He was elected and will

now serve until the year 2006, even after his college days are over.

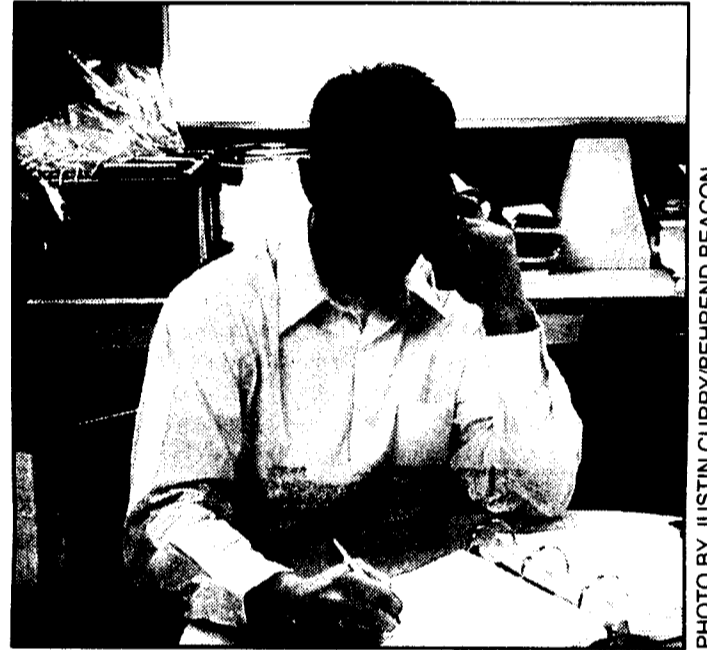
The mission of the NCAA Division III SAAC is to promote a positive student-athlete experience. This is done by protecting and promoting opportunities for all student-athletes, in order to protect their well-being. Fostering a positive student-athlete image, while maintaining the tenants of the Division III philosophy is also a prime focus of the SAAC.

Student Athlete Advisory Committee management councils, like the one Masilunas is now a member of, give student athletes the ability to discuss issues with the SAAC.

Division II and III SAAC committees continue to be involved in legislative issues that arise at the NCAA convention.

The honors for Masilunas did not stop after being elected. This week he received an invitation in the mail from the NCAA president to attend a national reception.

"I'm flattered to be elected to management council. I always looked up to the people there. I always thought they were the ones with the most experience. It's going to be a good experience. I'm really looking forward to," Masilunas said.



SAAC President Dave Masilunas was promoted in November to the management council of the SAAC Committee Division III. Masilunas will now represent student athletes throughout the region and nation.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN CURRY/BEHREND BEACON

Controversy surrounds removal

Meeting leads to cheerleading adviser's dismissal



Members of the cheerleading squad perform at a basketball game following the removal of adviser Haldis Larsen. Cheerleading captain Jennifer DeFrancesco, front row, third from left, hastook over the reins of leading the squad and athletic director Brian Streeter became the interim head coach.

by Adam Massaro
staff writer

Cheerleader adviser Haldis Larsen was released after a meeting in November with athletic director Brian Streeter and the cheerleading team.

Streeter decline to comment on the reason for Larsen's dismissal because

Penn State does not comment on matters of personnel.

Larsen was contacted by the Beacon but declined comment.

Streeter will now serve as interim head coach for the remainder of the season.

On Nov. 3, eight cheerleading squad members walked out of practice. These members contacted Streeter and set up a

meeting with him in an attempt to come to a resolution regarding the civil unrest among the cheerleaders and the coach.

"It was a situation that had to be remedied. Otherwise we wouldn't have as many kids cheering, and the kids that had been with us would just be walking on campus," Streeter said.

Upon conclusion of the meeting,

Streeter addressed the squad members, telling them whoever was still interested in cheering to show up for practice the following day.

It was the next day that Streeter informed the cheerleaders that Larsen had been fired and he would act as the interim head coach. With the squad five weeks into the season, Streeter would not have enough time to find a new coach and instead would oversee the squad.

"I feel like everybody that was at that meeting tried to voice their opinions," said cheerleader Stefanie Stewart, DUS 03. "We all wanted what was in the best interest of the squad, and we would do what ever it took in order to make sure that things were going to work right."

Captain Jennifer DeFrancesco, was placed in charge of developing routines and conducting practice.

"We are putting our trust in Jen. We let her do everything, and we are still trying to compete for the future," said Laura Spencer, COMBA 05, a third-year squad member.

The exact reasons behind Larsen's dismissal have not been released due to the Penn State policy, Streeter said.

Larsen was hired at the beginning of this semester when former adviser Adam Goss unexpectedly resigned to accept a position at Princeton University. Larsen took over a squad that returned 10 women from the previous season and had the highest turnout for the squad in the last three years.

According to DeFrancesco, squad members and the coach disagreed from the beginning of the season.

"I think she had some wonderful ideas, but the way she went about them did not

click with the rest of us," said DeFrancesco. "As a new coach, I think she should have come in and said 'what do you guys want to do, what do you guys have, what have you guys done in the past,' and it wasn't like that. Anything we wanted to do, she was like, 'no that was the past, we're not doing it that way. It's my way or no way.'"

In addition, some cheerleaders said other issues infringed upon the adviser-athlete relationship.

"I know that her personal life is none of our business, but it affected us," said DeFrancesco. "From Behrend's rules, as a coach she is not to be hanging out with anyone on the squad. Yet, she went out with a couple of the girls on the squad; she was on campus drinking, buying them alcohol."

Spencer also confirmed Larsen's actions. Several other members of the squad were contacted but declined comment.

"If a coach is drinking on campus, then that's a problem," Streeter said. "Off-campus is different, we can't control that."

Streeter said that while there is no NCAA rule that prohibits the consumption of alcohol while coaches and athletes are present, Behrend tries to create an atmosphere where there is no presence of alcohol at student-athletic events.

In the 2003-2004 NCAA Division III Constitution, Article 2, Section 2.4 states "it is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment that fosters a positive relationship between the student athlete and coach."

-Lauren Packer contributed to this report.

PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY/BEHREND BEACON