

# Advising chat connects students, advisers

By Lisa Lamendola  
staff writer

For the second consecutive year, the Advising Center is hosting an Advising Chat room. The Residence Life supported chat room is for getting answers to last minute advising questions and for general answers to general questions.

"The chat room can't take the place of a face-to-face meeting with your adviser," says Patrick Smith an Undergraduate Adviser.

The purpose of the chat room is for students to ask quick questions before they register for classes.

"We'll direct them to a faculty adviser if complicated questions arise," says Smith.

Confidentiality is stressed in the chat room and everyone is anonymous. The moderators, Patrick Smith and Biddy Brooks, will never ask for your student ID in the chat room.

The chat room is just another way the faculty is trying to cater to the current students and meet them half way. When the chat was first introduced, advisors noticed that most of the students who asked questions, were sophomores and juniors. This year, however, the turn out seems to be largely freshmen.

The students sparked the idea for technology to be a greater part of the interaction between faculty and students. Three years ago, the Advising Center and Residence Life began using AOL Instant Messenger as a way to keep in contact with students. Now, AIM is used for first-year chats, quick, one-on-one conversations, tutoring chats and the advising chat room.

"About 20 percent of my weekly appointments could be handled electronically," says Smith.

Although the chat room is seeing good participation, the numbers are still low.

"Participation could be more," says Smith.

Students seem to be appreciative of the chat room option though.

"It's good to have. I just hopped online for a few minutes and got answers to a lot of my questions," says Kim Barsness, first semester freshman.

The chats are from Nov. 9, - Nov. 23, for an hour everyday but Fridays.

The hours are as follows:  
Mondays 11 a.m. to noon  
Tuesdays noon to 1 p.m.  
Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursdays 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

More information can be found at: <http://www.pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/academic/dus/chatroom.htm>

# Computer science speaker double-header

By Jeff Smen  
staff writer

On Nov. 17, Albert Whale, a certified information systems auditor and certified information systems security professional gave a lecture as part of the Computer Science Speaker Series. The lecture entitled, "Internet Security and the Butterfly Effect," was held in the Otto Behrend Science Building in room 101 at 7:30 p.m.

Whale's speech was on the effects of different types of security around the globe. His presentation dealt with the internet, security, and what could happen in a disaster on a global scale.

Whale has had over 20 years of professional experience being a computer consultant in various fields like computer systems, network and security. Whale is even the first consultant to achieve royalty status among his peers. He received his Bachelor of Science from Penn State in the field of electrical engineering in 1985. Whale manages a spam filtering business know as [www.Spam-Zapper.com](http://www.Spam-Zapper.com), and is the co-founded and current president of the Pittsburgh FBI InfraGard Member Alliance.

Thursday, Dr. Lukas Sekanina, a Fulbright Scholar from the Czech Republic, presented his lecture titled, "Evolvable Hardware and Evolvable Computing." The lecture, which was a part of the school of engineering speaker series, was presented in Reed 114, at noon.

Dr. Sekanina's presentation was about how hardware is always evolving. Evolvable hardware is coming a part of computers more and more in this modern age, so advanced that it is now possible for computer systems to automatically reconfigure themselves. Dr.

Sekanina demonstrated some of the many different circuit designs that are being used today's digital circuits. For those who did not understand much about the evolution of computers, Dr. Sekanina explained the theory behind the concept and various examples of where it could be used. An example is the rovers that land on mars in order to study the atmosphere. If the rover were to fail, this technology would be able to fix itself in order to continue it's work.

Dr. Sekanina currently works in the Czech Republic as an assistant professor at Brno University of Technology. He is also currently working as a scholar researching with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His work with computers has won Dr. Sekanina several awards including the Merit Award at the GECCO Human Competitive Result Competition

of this year, and the Siemens Award for outstanding MSc thesis which he received in 1999.

When asked about the speaker series, Dr. Ford, who helped put the engineering speaker series together, he said, "This is our third speaker series this year, and the first two have been pretty successful with around seventy to eighty faculty and students attending, even people in the community attending."

The next computer science speaker will be on Dec. 1 in room 101 of the Otto Science Building at 7:30 p.m. with Sreela Sasi with Gannon University. His presentation is entitled "Potential of Biometric Techniques for Security." The school of engineering will be having their next speaker series on January 20 at noon, with Dr. Gray of Behrend. Dr. Gray's presentation is entitled "Synthetic Vision in Transportation Systems."



Dr. Sekanina lectured students on "evolvable hardware" for the computer science speaker series.

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