

NEWS - YEAR IN REVIEW

Concert proposal misses deadlines, violates policy

By Dan Snedden
from the March 4 issue

Most students buying tickets would not recognize that the New Found Glory concert scheduled for March 31 had several administrative difficulties from its inception up to and including its current status. However, students who work intimately with the Student Activity Fee suggest that the aid given to a staff created proposal may have gone too far.

Kris Torok, who is both a staff member and SAF committee member, submitted the proposal for the concert. According to the SAF Handbook, the proposal violated SAF guidelines with its use of outdated quotes and exceeding the maximum allowance of \$3,000 for speakers and/or performers.

The proposal was submitted on March 18, 2004 and requested \$38,500. That amount was requested based on the cost of the 2001 Sugar Ray concert. On April 29, 2004, the Office of Student Activities was awarded \$19,250 for the concert with the completion date of Jan. 31. A memo regarding the allocation sent from the SAF committee to the Office of Student Activities stated, "The Committee funded this request provided that these funds will be released if no one is under contract by Nov. 3, 2004. If this program occurs, the Committee has agreed to pay any balance of expenses not covered by ticket sales out of JIT."

As of Thursday, the contract had yet to be signed.

The memo went on, "The award must be expended during the Fall 2004 semester according to the completion date indicated on your proposal." The application process for the concert committee began in October of 2004 with the selection of Concert Committee Chair Ross Zambanini, INBUS 04.

The deadline for applying to the concert committee was Jan. 21.

Despite the then still-forming concert committee and the passage of both the Nov. 3 deadline and the unspent money at the end of the Fall 2004 semester, the SAF Committee, through use of the ambiguous appeals process, awarded an additional \$15,750 for the concert and changed the conditions of the award to saying, "If no bid is received by Jan. 31, these funds will be rescinded." The notable change was from having a group "under [a legally binding] contract,



on the original proposal, to a bid which is not necessarily legally binding.

"These contracts take a long time, they're large documents," said Torok. "When we have a contract over \$10,000 it has to go through University Park. I can sign contracts up to \$10,000 for our campus. Anything over \$10,000 or a contract that has a rider attached to it has to go through University Park and be signed by Risk Management."

Torok explained that the process behind getting a band under contract was a catch-22 saying, "We cannot submit a bid to a group without having a budget ready to go. Therefore, we have to have the money to back it up. There's no way I can get accurate quotes without the group's rider."

Regarding the fact that the proposal was staff initiated, Torok said, "There's no reason going through the Concert Committee interview and application process if there is not going to be any money."

"The proposal was put in on behalf of the students," said Scott

Soltis, SGA president and SAF committee co-chair. "If it's what the students want and what the students deserve, then the students have every right to get what they deserve."

Concerning the breach of the SAF Handbook guidelines limiting performance costs to no more than \$3,000 Soltis said, "Once in a while, when it's flat-out not possible [to sponsor an event], you have to have flexibility with the guidelines." He went on to say, "There are a lot of circumstances where an exact quote is not an option."

"On the one hand I can appreciate the fact that in order to get a Concert Committee going, they may need to have some money," said Dave Daquelente, executive director of the Lion Entertainment Board. "At the same time if it's going to be a concert committee run by students, their needs to be students organizing and planning it."

"We [the LEB] are very fortunate that we do get a pretty fluid budget for the year that we get to spend and program with at our discretion. The organization and myself are very grateful for the liberty and responsibility we have with SAF funds," said Daquelente, but he continued with, "What happened was that there was money first and then there were students, my only concern was that there should have been students there before the money."

The LEB is one of the two organizations on campus who's sole purpose is to provide entertainment for the students. The other entertainment organization, the Matchbox Players, have different feelings concerning the funding process surrounding the concert.

"SAF is very frustrating for me as a former president of the Matchbox Players. All of the bureaucracy on this campus prevents things from getting done," said Steven O'Donnell HIST 08. "They do give you training courses to let you understand how it works, but as an organization, they're working against you. I've always had to combat them to get things."

O'Donnell felt that faculty and staff members who do not pay the Student Activity Fee should not have access to the fund because they initiate events, "for their pride because it gives them a better name because they are looking for other work so it gives them a reputation that they can put together large events."

Ticket sales have been slow with over 600 of the 2,500 sold. However at \$15 a ticket, it is impossible for the event to break even. "I see events sponsored and funded by SAF that are trying to break even, when our events sell out and often make a profit."

SGA presidential candidate resigns in face of disqualification

By Daniel J. Stasiewski
from the April 1 issue

The SGA Presidential election was turned upside-down March 25 when presidential candidate Zack Mentz and his running mate, Seth Laird, resigned from the race.

Mentz currently serves as senator and was looking to upset current SGA Vice-President Justin Curry and Chair Pro-tempore Alexander Henderson. The Mentz/Laird campaign received much grassroots support that created what hopeful students considered to be a formidable challenger.

The resignation was shocking to students involved in the campaign, with aggressive, accusatory letters being sent to administrators. Signs saying "Let Zack Run" were also put up and subsequently torn down. Mentz said that though he is taking the resignation in stride, he does feel bad for the students who supported him.

"I would come in and someone would hand me a stack of buttons they made," said Mentz. "I felt bad for them because of all the work they put in."

The Mentz/Laird ticket turned in their resignation after an undisclosed policy violation would have forced their disqualification. The violation, which was discovered by Director of Student Affairs and SGA Adviser Ken Miller, was uncovered on the same day Mentz and Laird turned in their resignation.

SGA President Scott Soltis, SGA Election Committee Chair Mike Taylor, Mentz and Laird were involved in the meeting that resulted in the resignation of two candidates. Mentz described

the meeting as "cordial."

Paperwork and petitions for potential candidates were due March 4, the Friday before Spring Break. Soltis said in an e-mail interview that the Election Committee does an initial review of the candidates, followed by Miller's full review. Because Miller was attending to family matters, the discrepancy was not uncovered until March 25.

Mentz, however, admits both he and Laird knew about the discrepancy before the paperwork was turned in. He said he didn't think it would be a problem.

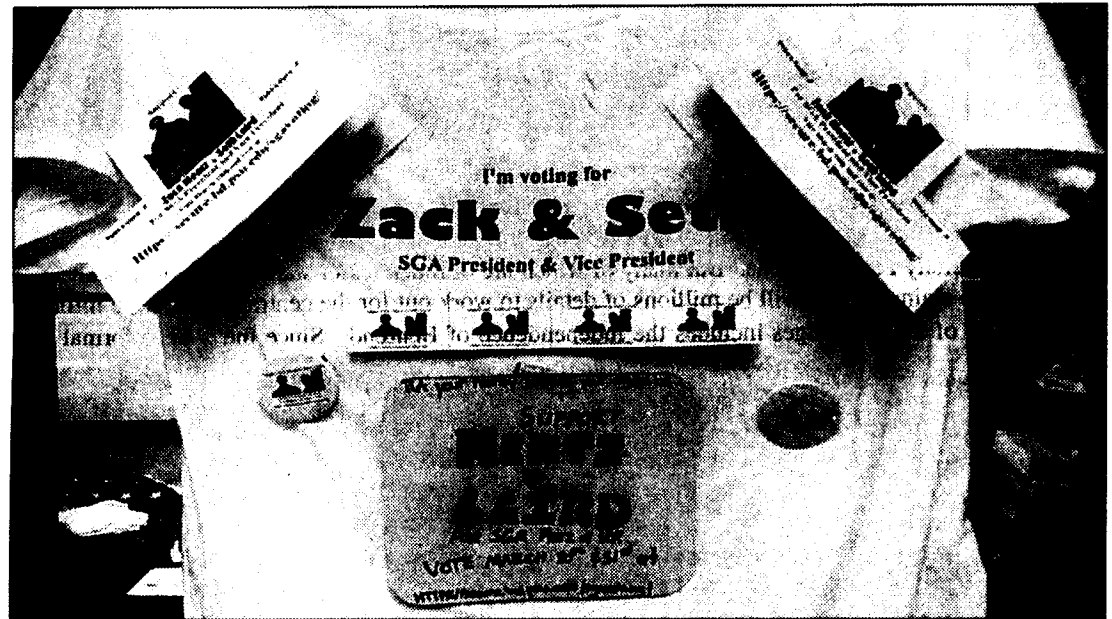
The Making of a Candidate

Mentz came to Behrend from Penn State Mont Alto knowing he wanted to be involved with SGA. He read the SGA constitution over the summer and when he finally did get to campus, ran successfully for an open senate position.

During his campaign for senate, Mentz used some signs with which Soltis disagreed. The conversation that ensued showed Soltis exactly what kind of SGA member Mentz would be.

"He and I talked for probably an hour and it was then that I realized the passion that he had," said Soltis. "For every explanation I had for him, he had a counter question and we probably could have gone on all night, but all in all it was a good experience for both of us."

Senator Mentz eventually went on to be a member of the SGA Budget, Constitutional Review and Public Relations Committees. He is also a member of close to a dozen campus clubs. As the



DANIELLE FAULKNER/BEHREND BEACON

campaign began, Mentz and Laird became "affiliated" with numerous other clubs and organizations.

"If you want people to vote for you, you have to go out and support them," Mentz said. "Luckily, we're just involved kids, Seth (Laird) and I."

The enterprising candidates had more ideas from there. Mentz contacted the Pizza Hut and Dominos restaurants on Buffalo Road and asked them to put Mentz/Laird election flyers on every box delivered to Behrend. The restaurants agreed, but not everyone was as helpful.

"We wanted to have three standing signs on

wood frames going along the road to the Reed Building and the Science Building," said Mentz. The signs would have been made with bed sheets, but Operations would not allow the candidates to put up the large signs.

Mentz and Laird made mouse pads for the Reed computers, purchased a large advertisement in the Behrend Beacon, folded more than 100 table tents with volunteers and had "Zack and Seth" T-shirts made. Mentz was even prepared to e-mail every on-campus student reminding them to vote on Election Day. The campaign, however, came to an end before the e-mails could even be sent.

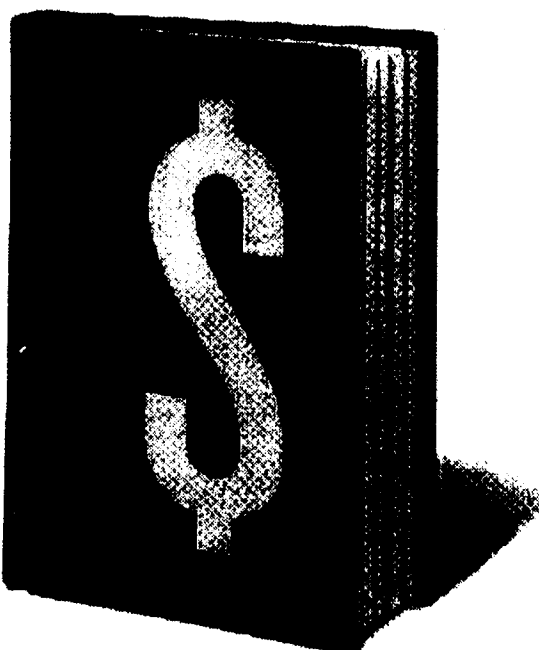
Empty your backpack and fill your pockets.

Act now and get cash back for books.

IT IS NOW TIME TO SELL BACK YOUR TEXTBOOKS. SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR! BRING YOUR BOOKS TO THE BOOKSTORE, IF THEY ARE BEING USED IN THE FALL SEMESTER AND THE STORE IS NOT OVERSTOCKED YOU WILL RECEIVE 50% OF THE NEW SELLING PRICE. IF THE BOOKS ARE NOT BEING USED IN THE FALL THEN THE AMOUNT YOU RECEIVE IS BASED ON NATIONAL DEMAND.

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MAY 6 - 8AM - 4:30PM
MAY 7 - 11AM - 2PM



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Parking lot cameras out of the question

By Bradley Stewart and Lacy Buzard
from Nov. 19 issue

Cars in the Behrend lots are at risk. Over the course of four weeks 12 incidents of vehicle crime were reported. Broken down, approximately three cars per week are targeted for vandalism and theft on campus, racking up thousands of dollars worth of property damage.

Police and Safety have officers, property protection guards and a student auxiliary who patrol the parking lots. There cannot be someone in the lots at all times, however.

"If you have that many cars parked during the nighttime hours, anywhere, there's a certain percentage of them that are going to get broken into," said James Amann, director of Police and Safety Services.

Car criminals usually break into cars for valuables such as CDs and stereo equipment. Amann suggests that students lock their vehicles and keep costly items out of sight.

There are surveillance cameras in all residence halls, except the apartments, and in Bruno's, but none in the parking lots. The cameras were installed to deter and convict delinquent individuals caught on camera. Why not use them in the parking lots?

Cameras that would be needed in the parking lots would have to be more advanced than the \$200 cameras used in the residence halls. They would have to have special zoom capabilities and the ability to be controlled manually.

Other obstacles include not having a large enough workforce to monitor cameras 24 hours per day and not having room to build the needed facilities. Amann does not anticipate any additional space once the REDC is

completed.

Amann explained that the command center that would be needed to monitor parking lot cameras would have to be very advanced. In addition to multiple displays, the command center would need to have dispatch capabilities which would increase the price dramatically.

"[Cameras] are far too big of a ticket item for Police Services," said Amann. "They would have to be purchased through the university itself."

The cameras now in use are monitored by Housing and Food services. The footage from the cameras is fed into a digital database that is accessed from a web-based program. Upon the report of criminal activity, camera footage can be reviewed for the presence of criminal activity.

Cameras in the Lawrence Hall lobby were recently instrumental in catching a vandal. A vending machine in the hall lobby was damaged along with a chair. Housing provided Police and Safety with the footage of the incident and Police and Safety was able to use the footage to find the suspect.

"I don't want to catch people and prosecute them; my goal isn't to play police officer," said Randal Geering, director of Housing and Food Services. "The cameras are a deterrent."

Housing bought its cameras from Best Access along with seven digital video recorders (approximately \$800 each) with website access. With the amount and size of the parking lots, cameras to monitor them would be more expensive.

Parking lots, however, are not under Housing's jurisdiction. Both Amann and Geering agree that placing cameras in the lots would be an all-or-nothing task which would cost upwards in the thousands of dollars.