

# NEWS

## Behrend students voice their thoughts on Obama and Clinton as presidential candidates

By Scott Muska  
staff writer

America is currently undergoing a time of political change, which started when the Democratic party overtook the Republicans and the majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives. This period of change was given the potential to be further escalated when liberal Barak Obama, Senator of Illinois, took the next necessary step towards adding his name into the running for the presidential bid in 2008 by filing for an Exploratory Council last Tuesday. His announcement was followed by New York Senator Hilary Rodham-Clinton's on Saturday that she would be entering the race.

Though Obama has not technically entered the race, the filing for Exploratory Council is the last step made before officially declaring people are speculating that Obama will very likely end up staying in the presidential race.

Both Obama and Clinton are very popular, and the possibility of either one becoming the next president of the United States is very feasible. The extreme significance of these

Senators and their choices to run for the Presidency will lie in their political face values of race and gender. Senator Obama could become the first African-American President, while Clinton could become the first female to hold the position.

The United States remains divided on their potential choices for the next president, even though the election will not take place for nearly two years. Liberal Penn State Behrend student Spencer Millis said, "It's still early, but at this point I would vote for Obama." Millis also said he thought it would be positive if either an African-American or female president was elected in 2008. "I think it would make a good statement to the rest of the world if we elected someone of a minority or of the female sex, especially [the] countries that still don't give minorities anything close to equal rights," Millis said.

Millis' statement seemed to go along with the current opinion of the Democratic Party and its members who are looking for a drastic change to shift the way in which the country is ultimately headed.

Some Republicans, however, are less ready

to adapt to such a change, and are so set against the Democratic Party's ideals that race and gender do not matter when selecting the next president. When asked who he would like to see elected to the presidency in '08 Behrend student and devout conservative, Evan Shaffer, said, "Any Republican. I wouldn't vote for either Obama or Clinton."

With the country so divided, the so-called "Golden Vote" may very well decide who wins our country's next election. Self-proclaimed member of the Independent party and Behrend student Zac Maas said he feels that Obama would be the better choice for the country. "It's better than a female president, because I feel like a male could better take charge in our current situation, which is war," said Maas.

Though it is extremely early in the political race, it appears as if there will be no landslide in the 2008 presidential election. The country is so divided and at odds between parties that it is too difficult to determine which direction our country will turn in the next two years, and who will be the next man or woman to lead the United States of America.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Obama (left) and Clinton (right) join other members of congress for President Bush's State of the Union address on Tuesday night.



Jerry Pohl/THE BEHREND BEACON

One World Tribe, the featured band for Martin Luther King III's speech, brought a variety of ethnic music to McGarvey Commons on January 18th.

The Behrend Beacon would like to say a special thank you to the COMM 260W contributing writers who worked with the "Classes are cancelled as Behrend is buried in snow" article on page one.

Jeff Barber  
Danielle Brown  
Casey McTiernan  
Whitney Tarwater  
Mandy Spearly

Heidi Brackbill  
Steve Fenton  
Tommy Phillips  
Lenny Smith  
Samantha Yong

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Between September 2005 and June 2006 Academic Freedom hearings were held by a committee of the Pennsylvania legislature – the first in the history of the Commonwealth. The hearings revealed that all existing academic freedom provisions at Pennsylvania's public universities were written to protect professors, not students. As a result of the hearings, however, the Faculty Senate at Penn State adopted a new policy that grants students at Penn State academic freedom rights for the first time.

The Penn State academic freedom policy states:

**It is not the function of a faculty member in a democracy to indoctrinate his/her students with ready-made conclusions on controversial subjects. The faculty member is expected to train students to think for themselves, and to provide them access to those materials which they need if they are to think intelligently. Hence in giving instruction upon controversial matters the faculty member is expected to be of a fair and judicial mind, and to set forth justly, without supersession or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators.**

In other words, the function of an education in a democratic society is to teach students how to think, not what to think. Penn State students have a right not to be force-fed "ready made conclusions" on controversial subjects. Students should be provided with required readings from more than one ideological perspective.

The Penn State academic freedom policy continues:

**No faculty member may claim as a right the privilege of discussing in the classroom controversial topics outside his/her own field of study. The faculty member is normally bound not to take advantage of his/her position by introducing into the classroom provocative discussions of irrelevant subjects not within the field of his/her study.**

In other words no speeches on the Iraq War in English classes or Women's Studies courses or in any class where the subject matter is not about Iraq or American foreign policy. No attempts to promote in class a political candidate during elections, or at any time in between. No wasting of students' valuable time with personal agendas that have nothing to do with the academic subject they signed up for.

If you are a student at Penn State, you pay good money for professional expertise, not off-the-cuff political advocacy. You can get opinions for free on talk radio or in the student cultural center. You have a right to form your own conclusions on controversial matters, without worrying about how this might affect your grade; and you have a right to be presented by your professor with readings on more than one side of a controversial issue. It's your education. See that you get one.

Information on how to file a grievance can be found at: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/R-6.html>

This ad has been placed by Students for Academic Freedom as a public service. For more information contact Sara Dogan at [sara@studentsforacademicfreedom.org](mailto:sara@studentsforacademicfreedom.org) or visit our website at [www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org](http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org).

