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Students learn to cope with the stress of finals

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Everyone knows that final exams can be a little stressful. Some people get more stressed out than others, but there are lots of different ways for everyone to cope with stress. Some first year students get stressed and others don't. Eric Devlin has many finals this semester, but he's not too worried. "I have four finals this year. Whenever someone asks me what to expect I say, 'I never actually learned this stuff.' I'm not sure what to expect."

While Devlin doesn't put too much of his time into cramming, he does have a preparation technique for finals. "I take notes and write down a condensed version of them later. Recopying them helps me study the material, but it takes a while. It works well though."

Most people aren't quite so lucky to just be able to recopy notes, however, and Matt Scezyne from the Personal Counseling office recommends to start studying up to two weeks ahead of time. "Study what's best for you, and do it in a way that you are motivated to get done, but you shouldn't try to cram. You won't learn anything if you try to teach yourself something new at the last minute."

While students like Devlin say that they don't get stressed out over final exams, there are others out there who do. For those students who do get stressed, Scezyne recommends taking breaks while you study and practicing stress relief techniques. "Yes, taking a break while I study gives my mind a small reprieve and helps with my focus," Devlin agreed.

Some of the ways to prepare for final exams include eliminating stress, not cramming, and getting a good night's sleep and a good healthy meal before and during studying. "You should eat things that are high in protein, and less carbs. Carbs need sugar to process, and will make you tired more quickly," says Scezyne.

There are different ways to cope with the stress of final exams. The easiest of them all is to just remember to breathe. When you get too worked up, just take deep, calming breaths. This will help your system to relax. Another way to deal with stress is to exercise. Not the most desirable option for a lot of people, and maybe not the easiest to fit into a schedule, but definitely doable.

"Another method is progressive muscle relaxation. You go through and tense and release each of the major muscles in the body, and when you're done it will leave you relaxed. Meditation is a good one, but takes time and practice to be effective," says Scezyne.

And lastly, there is visualization. The effect is to visualize a peaceful scene, incorporating as many of the five senses—hear, sight, smell, taste, and touch—as you can. The more senses you incorporate, the more realistic the vision is, and the more relaxation you'll get from it.

Contents	
News.....	1-2
Opinion.....	3
Humor.....	4
Entertainment.....	5
Student Life.....	6
Sports.....	7-8

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Our offices are located downstairs in the Reed Union Building.

Students fuming over traffic conditions on College Drive



Chris Brown/THE BEHREND BEACON

A line of cars waiting to leave campus after classes. Traffic is known to back up for over 15 minutes.

By Evan Koser
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With the winter season growing more harsh and the snow beginning to pile up, Behrend drivers are finding it more of a hassle to start their engines each day.

As snow builds up and the nights grow colder, and with the rain the campus has seen in the past week, ice is also becoming another nuisance that walkers and drivers are having a hard time coping with. One may notice students slipping on unseen patches of ice and even cars are losing their traction on the roads. The bend that connects Jordan road to the banana lot, as most know it, was dangerous enough with the way drivers turn into it. Now with the added slush and ice on the road, it's going to become paramount for drivers to remember to slow down when taking that turn.

Trying to leave the campus between the hours of two and three o'clock in the afternoon can be frustrating. In fact, it can seem more like a chore than a pathway to freedom from the stress that the approaching finals are bringing.

"It sucks! Everyday I get out of class, go to my car, and wait. Wait, wait, wait. I continue to wait in my car while the slow moving traffic ticks away at my time. I have a job and other things to do," says Jared Holmes, a student affected by the increasing traffic problem. "I have an average 15-minute wait" he says. Also becoming a problem are the tightly packed parking lots.

Courtney Minesweaser, another student affected by the escalating problem lives at University Gates.

"The one day I was out of class by 1:50 but could not get to my apartment until around 2:15 because of the traffic. I wish someone would fix the problem!" Minesweaser, who normally walks to her classes, has been hitching rides from friends because of the snow and harsh cold weather.

Some students have suggested that another road be paved; however, an idea like this needs to be approved by university officials. Even some professors have been complaining about the traffic situation.

One professor, who wished to stay anonymous says, "the situation is terrible. I've missed my own class because I was late due to these traffic problems. I showed up and my entire class was gone."

Unfortunately, there is only one road that connects all of the parking lots. Even if a new road were to be constructed, the question of where it would be placed is raised. Behrend's main area of traffic is already condensed enough, and a new road already has no place to go.

Perhaps the only suggestion for those affected by the worsening situations is for anyone having trouble driving to and from campus is to just bare the cold weather and walk to class when the chance arises.

For the time being, the drivers of Behrend are going to have to be patient with the weather and wait out the snow until conditions get better. As a word of caution for those of you that walk to your classes, be careful and watch out for any hidden patches of ice on your way to classes or to eat.

Sample Center hosts "Keep a Civil Tongue Speaking Competition"

By Matthew Schwabenbauer
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The Janet Neff Sample Center for Manners and Civility hosted a speaking competition last Thursday, Dec. 6 called "Keep a Civil Tongue Speaking Competition." The event went on from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and was held in the Smith Chapel. Each of the seven participants of the event came from a different section of the CAS 100 Effective Speech course. Participants were nominated by their fellow classmates and were approved by their course instructor.

The contestants had to give a five minute presentation on the subject of "civility and society." Participants were allowed to consult with their professors before they gave their address, but the speeches had to be delivered extemporaneously.

The speeches were reviewed by a panel of three judges who then picked first, second and third place speakers. The panel of judges included Kim Young and Marilyn Gilreath, both of which are CAS 100 instructors. The third judge was Sabina Medilovic, the winner of the contest this past spring.

The first place winner of the event, Elisa Pierce, received a \$75 gift card to the Bookstore. In second place came

Meagan Bush and third place was taken by Jacob Bohrer. Bush received a \$50 gift card to the Bookstore, and Bohrer went home with a \$25 gift card. Each of the other participants received a \$10 gift card to the Bookstore.

The competition was one of multiple events that the Sample Center will be hosting to encourage civility and respect among members of the Behrend campus. The CAS 100 class is a required course for all Penn State students and by allowing each section of the class to nominate a speaker from their group opened up the event to a wide range of people.

The Sample Center was founded to promote a civility-enriched academic environment on the Behrend campus. The Center was established by Corry Journal publisher George Sample in honor of his wife, Janet Neff. According to Rod Troester, speaking on behalf of the Sample Center, "Not only do we wish to develop effective public speaking and small group communication skills, but directly or indirectly we also encourage communication attitudes and behaviors of civility and respect for others and their ideas. Universities cannot exist without the free and open exchange of ideas."

New alcohol program required for all incoming freshmen

By Lenny Smith
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A new, mandatory program about alcohol awareness will now be required of all incoming freshmen, starting with those students arriving for the fall 2008 semester.

AlcoholEdu is run by Outsidethe Classroom.com and according to their website, the program is designed to do many things including motivating behavioral changes, linking choices about drinking to academic and personal success, and helping students practice safer decision-making.

Christy Ferri, a Center High School senior who plans to attend Penn State University Park thinks drinking on college campuses is a problem, but believes the program is unnecessary.

"I don't like that," Ferri said. "I think a program like that should just be for the people that get in trouble. It's not fair for people that don't need it."

The program tests over 400,000 students every year and has compiled data based on the student's answers. According to the program's website, the program has an effect on how often a student drinks heavily, which the researchers consider five or more drinks, student blackout rates, and the number of students that think about the Blood Alcohol Content while drinking.

Data compiled by the group shows that students who have not completed the AlcoholEdu program drank heavily much more often than those students who had not completed the program.

The four-part program will require students to take surveys and knowledge-based tests as well as write personalized journal entries about one's own history with alcohol.

The program has different science-based tracks of questions and information. The track that a student completing the program takes is based on the information that the student provides, such as their past experience and gender.

Erika Tower, a spokesperson for AlcoholEdu, said that all responses during the program are anonymous.

However, students like Ferri think that the personal information that the program will require is going a little too far.

"Even if the program is anonymous, it's over the Internet," Ferri said. "Nothing is anonymous on Internet."

The program, which is being implemented university-wide, has shown signs of success. Towers said that schools that require students to complete the program have 50 percent less negative consequences, like blacking out and class absences when compared to students at schools where the program is not mandatory.

About 500 universities currently use the program with 200 of those requiring the program for first year students. There are 24 schools in Pennsylvania currently using the program.

"It's not about telling students what to do," Tower said. "It's about giving them the information to make their own decisions."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Contest winners Elisa Pierce, Meagan Bush, Jacob Bohrer, and Sample Center Director Rod Troester.

Student grows during classroom assignment

By Michelle Quail
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"I put on the sticker, looked in the mirror, and was petrified." That's what Psychology student Andrew Moczulski said about a recent assignment he was given in his Human Sexuality class. Dr. Eric Corty assigned his Psychology 422 class an experiment last October that required students to face their feelings about homosexuality. Many students found it both difficult and eye opening.

Corty's intention was to teach his students a lesson about discrimination by asking them to wear a rainbow triangle on their clothes in public. Corty handed identical symbols to all of his students that were to be pinned to their clothing. He then gave students two options. They could choose to wear the triangle in public, or not, but they had to explain themselves. His instructions read, "Write down your reactions to this experience. Were you able to do it? If not, why not? (It is OK not to wear the triangle in public as long as you explain your reasons for your actions.)" By doing this assignment, students had to confront their own views on homosexuality. "I wanted them to see what it felt like and assess their own beliefs, and maybe they aren't as liberal as they think," says Corty. "The results were as I expected. Many students were treated differently."

A small number of students weren't sure if it was their own

Continued on page 2.