

NEWS

New Facebook application targets PSU students

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A new application on the popular social-networking site Facebook.com has made research for Penn State students easier.

With the application, students can now search The CAT, the ProQuest database, get help from a librarian.

Freshman Marc Powers said, "I can only study and research for so long, then there's Facebook."

The Penn State Librarian Staff is well aware of students' addiction to the site and have made interesting accommodations to help students like Powers.

Many students at Behrend were unaware of this relatively new Facebook application and student reaction was mixed. Some, like Selina Chavez, argued that the application was not "legitimate enough" for researching purposes.

Russ Hall, Reference Librarian at Behrend's Lilley Library, gave insight to the advantages and disadvantages of using the site. "We created the site hoping that it would make researching easier for students [while they were already on their Facebook

accounts.]" The site is very basic and simple. Start by typing in any key word on the search button, which then displays all available books and articles available from every Penn State campus.

The problem with this researching technique is that the site is not able to limit the search to Behrend College. Hall also admitted that when typing in a search for a specific author "only 2 out of 12 findings" were the author he had searched.

Hall added that the site is superb for "general researching topics," more than specific ones. An important thing to remember about this Penn State run application is that it only allows Penn State students to access the application. If a student attempts to use the site from home, it will ask for the student's user ID and password for clarification purposes.

Sophomore Michael Swarzel took advantage of the application's access to Penn State Libraries. After his first use, he said, "The site was really cool and helped me find some very useful information for my research papers."

The application is based on making it quick and easy for all the Facebook users from Penn State. In the same effort, Hall recently started a Facebook group for Behrend students called, "Lilley Library of Penn State Behrend."

Although Facebook is an addicting entertainment method for many students, Penn State is finding ways to create a more beneficial side to the site, promoting education using common applications accessible to all Penn State students. Since its premier in the fall of 2007 the application has

over 1,300 users. To access the application visit apps.facebook.com/psulibrary.

"We created the site hoping that it would make researching easier for students,"

**-Russ Hall
Reference Librarian
Lilley Library**

Activity fees could be increasing again

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we only have about \$35,000-\$40,000 to allocate to them."

Since there are not enough funds to go around, the CCSG is looking into a resolution to raise the activity fee so that campuses like Behrend have more to give to the students who want to hold an activity. These numbers have been fairly consistent over the course of one academic year, but unfortunately, some requests are not eligible to be funded. Not all requests come from clubs and organizations, either. Sometimes, students who want to hold events on campus simply come in groups to ask for funding so they can hold an activity on campus.

According to Ben Gilson, Student Government Association (SGA) President, students pay \$64 a semester. The

increase would be three percent plus two dollars to match inflation—if the fee is not raised, then our buying power as a campus will change for next year. It is almost like losing money, because we will not be matching inflation.

"The fee will keep up student funding, and keep student activities going," said Gilson. "Personally, I'm fine with pitching in an extra five dollars, but the decision isn't up to me."

Ultimately, it comes down to the students anyhow. Students can expect a referendum on the next SGA election on where the fee will be in terms of price. Depending on the student vote, the fee may or may not be increased after the next SGA election in April.

'Sleeping Bag Weekend' helps prospective students in the decision process

By Krista Jones
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For students who are trying to make their decision on where to go to college, Penn State Behrend offers a program referred to as the "Sleeping Bag Weekend." Admissions and Student Affairs team up to run this program—they coordinate an overnight visit to Penn State Behrend to help show high school seniors what a night living at Behrend would be like.

There were 17 high school students—seven male and ten female—scheduled to come up to Behrend this past weekend to stay with volunteer hosts who would take them and show them around campus. Unfortunately, three students cancelled for poor weather conditions, bringing the number down to 14. So, there were 14 Behrend students involved, not to mention the roommates of the students who volunteered to host.

The volunteers usually come from the RA classes, and other students that scouts from Student Affairs can find who would be willing to host the high school seniors that sign up for this program. "Freshman are usually the best suited to a program like this," says Keith Cerroni from Student Affairs, "They're closer in age to the prospective students coming up." However, they do have students that are not freshman who help out with the program by hosting a senior.

When a student volunteers, they fill out a form giving their name, what weekends they are available to host, their gender, their intended major, contact information, their roommate(s) name(s), their own high school and home town, and a bit of a personal description.

The schedule for the weekend was relatively simple: seniors check in by 10:15 a.m. in Reed 113. From 10:20 through noon they have a welcome assembly by admissions, a leadership meeting done by Leadership Unlimited, and a tour of the

campus. They have lunch from 12:00 to 12:50 and then a mandatory meeting from 1:00-1:20 done by

a representative from Residence Life and Housing in Reed 114. After that are all the optional meetings, lasting from 1:20-3:20 in Reed 114. The host student can pick up the senior starting at 1:20 and, whether they went to the meetings or not, will have the student until sometime between 9 and 10 a.m. the next morning.

Elton Armady hosted Marcus Hollingsworth from the Leonardo Da Vinci High School in Buffalo, New York. "He was a really nice kid, and it was fun selling the campus. This is the second

time I've done this, and I'd love to do it again," says Armady. His student plans on attending Behrend in the fall of 2008.

Freshmen enrollment numbers for this year beginning in fall of 2007 were higher than usual, at 1,129 students—721 of which are male, and 408 of which are female. So does Behrend really need a program like this?

"As far as numbers go, no," says Felicia Williams in Admissions. "What we're trying to do is bring in students from out-of-state. As far as the region goes, we're looking to increase the number of students attending Behrend whose permanent residence is not in Pennsylvania." There will be another sleeping bag weekend on April 4 to the 5.

"[Marcus Hallingsowrth] was a really nice kid, and it was fun selling the campus."

**-Elton Armady
Student host**

Alternative Spring Break gains popularity throughout the university

By Krista Jones
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In the spring of 2007, Penn State Behrend sent a group of seven students and two faculty members out into the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to help aid cities in dire need of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

In Sept. 2006, Hurricane Katrina was the deadliest storm in the history of the United States with deaths surpassing 1,800 people. The storm produced devastating damages throughout the coastlines of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The Alternative Spring Break trip that Residence Life and the College's Center for Service Leadership planned last year was "an awesome experience," said Craig Berger, Resident Life Coordinator. The team plans to take this year in the Spring of 2008 a total of 72 volunteers, 23 being Penn State Behrend students. "When we got back from the first trip, Kelly [Shrout, interim associate director of student affairs, who also attended last year] and I [Berger], really had a chance to promote the trip and try to get more students excited about it."

The volunteers are only required to commit to the trip by Feb. 8 with a fee of \$300 per student for a week long experience. This affordable cost was due to each campus' Student Activity Fee organization taking care of lodging and travel expenses. This was

applicable to all Penn State students interested in the outreach program.

Pennsylvania 4-H is nationwide community organization committed to helping young people build leadership, citizenship, and life skills. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, 4-H club members from all across Pennsylvania took their lessons to heart and worked to raise money and aid packages for displaced Gulf residents. Berger acknowledged that "he nor any other members even know of the University Park's students" who also took part in the Alternative Spring Break trip. The Resident Life and Leadership groups at Penn State Behrend completely organized this trip in 2007 without any prior knowledge to the 4-H club affiliated with University Park.

This spring, the coordinators were able to take the whole year for preparation. Berger explained that the students were very willing to join the cause and "acted positively." The jobs the volunteers are assigned to are random but as Berger said, "We do what they need done." The lodging for the Behrend students is nothing exceptionally wonderful but there are "hot showers on demand." The beds themselves are "interesting" as Berger described them, but the volunteers accept what they are given with positive attitudes. Katrina took the lives of many individuals and the importance of this Alternative Spring Break trip does not go over looked.

Endowments keep PSU in the front of the pack

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Washington University - \$4.08 billion, Emory University - \$4.09 billion, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor - \$4.2 billion, Columbia University - \$4.4 billion, M.I.T. - \$5.8 billion, Stanford University - \$9.9 billion, Princeton - \$9.9 billion, Yale university - \$12.7 billion and coming in first place with a whopping endowment at \$22.6 billion, Harvard University.

Some of the wealthier universities are undergoing great scrutiny though, due to their large increase in endowments and their ever increasing astronomical tuition fees. It was stated among the Penn State Board of Trustees that Penn State's endowment is the only thing stopping the university from competing with a lot of the wealthier universities, but to increase Penn State's endowment, the university would need to increase state appropriations.

The university, according to Penn State spokesperson, Linda Powers, has been receiving disproportionate state funds over the years. This concern will be brought to the attention of the state's House of Appropriations Committee on Feb. 26 and a request for more state funding will be made.

In Sep. 2004, a request was made and approved for the same reason. The appropriations for Penn State increased about \$17.6 million that year, and though this was a generous increase, President of Penn State Graham B. Spanier stated that "we will begin the next year's budget cycle continuing to feel the effects of the steep reductions that were levied at the start of this decade". So it seems the fight for higher state appropriations has been an ongoing, stagnant battle for many years now, and still today Penn State needs to struggle to increase their state

funding and endowments in order to compete with the wealthier universities across the nation.

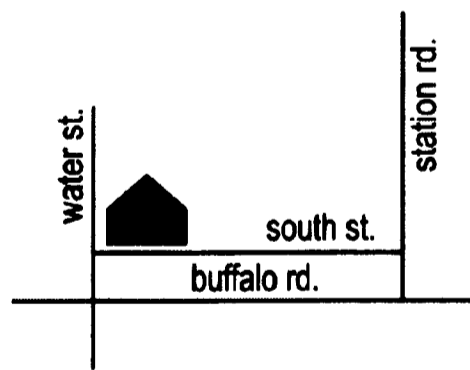
Endowment Rankings of Big Ten Schools (in billions)

- 8. Michigan — \$7.09
- 11. Northwestern — \$6.5
- 24. Minnesota — \$2.8
- 27. Ohio State — \$2.3
- 36. Purdue — \$1.79
- 45. Wisconsin — \$1.65
- 46. Penn State — \$1.6
- 47. Indiana — \$1.56
- 48. Illinois — \$1.52
- 59. MSU — \$1.25
- 79. Iowa — \$9.82 (millions)

Source: National Association of College and University Business Officers, in a study for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee

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