



The Behrend Beacon

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Behrend turns 60

“If I look back, the biggest change has been the increase in quality. We’ve gotten bigger and we’ve gotten better at the same time,” says Behrend Chancellor Jack Burke. “A lot of times you can do one and not the other, but we’ve done them both here.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A quick blast from the past reveals a young Behrend that would gradually reach the status it stands at today.

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“When I went down there, I asked the provost, ‘How long does Behrend have?’ He said you have three years to get it up and running, or it’s going to be a two year campus,” recalls Burke.

When given an ultimatum of that nature, there isn’t much room in the land of decision-making. So Chancellor Burke (who actually wouldn’t become Chancellor until some years later) and the rest of the incessantly dedicated staff went to work. This was in the 1980’s. A quick tour of the now flourishing campus manifests their achievements in ways that marvel.

Behrend initially started out in 1948, when Mary Behrend donated Glenhill Farm to the university. A mere 146 students made up the entire body. When Dr. Burke arrived in 1981, about 1800 students were attending Behrend, with 600 living on campus. Bruno’s Café was known as The Gorge, and the Science building, along with the Nick Building, were the only structures that held lecture/class.

Behrend is now home to 51 buildings across 725 acres of what once held the image of a working farm.

To say that times have changed would be more than a keen observation.

Chancellor Burke reminisces. “What has changed? I mean just about everything. We are much stronger academically and we’ve really increased the quality.” He goes on to reflect on the tremendous increase in student body and staff and what a significant transformation it has been. “You know it was a different time then, the Internet hadn’t been invented yet.” Chancellor Burke recalls with a warm smile.

Currently, there are more than 4500 students enrolled at the college—around 75% of these students will complete their degrees on Behrend soil. Before 1973, there was no option to graduate here—two years, then off to University Park. Now students are thrilled to stay the four years. Mike Wachter, a business major, is finishing up his final semester. “At first, I just assumed that I would leave after my sophomore year, but the campus was too good to leave. I know all of my professors and have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of social life since there are under 5000 students here,” explains Wachter. “If I had the chance to do it again, nothing would change.”

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College Democrats support local politician

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The College Democrats turned out Tuesday, Aug 26, to support Cindy Purvis as she campaigned for Pennsylvania District 49 Senate and condemned the recent administration of PHEAA, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

Purvis held a brief conference in Perry Square with the backing of Joshua Snyder and Chris Alphen, President and Vice President of Penn State Behrend’s College Democrats, along with other local supporters. Her main points addressed the “mismanagement and overspending” of PHEAA. Roughly \$3.9 million in employee bonuses, 40% of employee driving reimbursements going towards personal use and the annual salary of the CEO amounting to \$320,000 even though PHEAA is a nonprofit organization were among her list of grievances.

Even while the organization was spending extravagant amounts of money on themselves, they cut grants to students across the state.

UNDISCLOSED NUMBER OF RESIDENT ASSISTANTS FIRED SINCE PRE-FALL WEEK

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At least six Resident Assistants have been released from their positions in one of the greatest personnel disasters that the Office of Student Affairs has ever dealt with at Penn State Behrend.

Throughout “pre-fall,” the week prior to Orientation reserved for Residence Life training, at least 15 RAs out of a staff of 47 were found to be in violation of their contract, prompting the Office of Student Affairs to actively investigate the actions of their employees. So far, buildings known to have been affected by the subsequent removal of RAs include the Behrend Apartments, at least one of the suite buildings, and Lawrence and Ohio Halls.

A source with close connections to school administrators spoke with the Beacon on condition of anonymity. According to their information, which has neither been confirmed nor denied by the Office of Student Affairs, the ordeal began when a group of students was discovered on the roof of a campus residence hall. After looking into the situation, Residence Life coordinators found that the offenders were their own RAs.

This, according to the Beacon’s anonymous source, led to the unearthing of multiple cases of underage drinking involving Resident Assistants over the course of the pre-fall week. Out of at least fifteen RAs who had violated their contracts, a minimum of six have been let go to date, and others may be on probation.

The Office of Student Affairs would not comment on any actions that they are taking beyond stating that no public documents have been filed through the police. This means that the investigation lies within the domain of the University, specifically Student Affairs. As a result, the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act protects the students involved, so Behrend is unable to release any identifying information.

Ken Miller, Director of Student Affairs, explains that this is why the office is restricted from releasing information about the investigation. “Any issues concerning student discipline is confidential,” he says. “We have to respect the privacy of students.”

Even current RAs soon found that they would not be given any information regarding the situation. Associate Director of Student Affairs Kelly Shroud says that staff meetings were held to announce that things had occurred which would “change the [Residence Life] family.” No names or specific details were divulged at these meetings. For those who came by knowledge of the ordeal by other means, it was made clear that they should not share any information. One RA said in an e-mail that he believed he would jeopardize his job if he were to talk about what happened.

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