

COLLEGE LIFE

Freshmen find orientation a mixed bag

By Matthew Schwabenbauer
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Penn State Behrend welcomed 1,100 freshman this weekend, the second largest class in school history (the largest being the class of 2011). After all the unpacking, book-buying and goodbyes, the Penn State Behrend class of 2012 took part in a number of on-campus activities to welcome them to the University.

The events were similar to those used in past years with activities such as a luau, volleyball tournament and ice cream social.

For most, orientation began with mandatory hall meetings with their Resident Assistants to go over rules and campus policies. Following the meetings was a performance titled Dueling Pianos at McGarvey Commons, where students enjoyed a variety of covers of artists such as Billy Joel and Tom Petty, among many old favorites and student requests.

"They played a bunch of old stuff. They took requests too," said Seth Scannell, an undecided major. "I almost requested Vanessa Carlton, but I couldn't. I just couldn't do that."

"I liked it a lot," Jeff Fohr said of the performance, also an undecided major. "They played some songs I knew and I had a good time singing along."

The lack of contemporary tunes may have turned some people away from the performance.

"There were a lot of people there when it first started, but it just filtered out after a while," said Scannell.

Despite some of the events being mandatory, many freshman didn't attend orientation at all.

"I went to some things the first day, but didn't go to anything Saturday or Sunday. I didn't think it was important," said Selma Voljevica, an environmental engineering major. "I just slept instead."

Some avoided orientation on advice from those that went through it before.

"A lot of people that aren't freshman anymore

told me it was pointless," said Aida Caluk.

Many students avoid orientation each year, and this one was no different. Some believe they could be worse for it.

"Most of orientation was pretty relevant," said Chad Agosti, a physics major. "Most people didn't go, but I think it was actually helpful."

Saturday morning began with Diversity Matters, a program aimed to urge students to embrace and celebrate diversity.

"The speaker had good points that actually made you think," said Agosti. "Whether you wanted to be there or not, it was a good program."

Later that morning, freshmen were treated to a program from an educational company called Swift Kick.

"It was pretty cool," said Dean Davis, a Chemical Engineering major. "They told us how to use Myspace and Facebook to interact with each other and meet new people, or even to make money."

On Saturday afternoon was the Academic Convocation in Erie Hall, a ceremony which officially marks the beginning of the academic year.

"It was really hot. It was just a bunch of old guys walking down the aisle in robes," said Scannell. "Some students gave speeches too, but overall it was just boring."

Most students' favorite non-mandatory event each year is the Sunday Sandblast volleyball tournament hosted by Sigma Tau Gamma, this year was no different. "The tournament was a good way for new students to meet people other than freshmen," said Agosti. "I was on a team with a few guys who have been here a while, so it was nice to meet people other than just those on my floor."

With orientation over, freshmen have to adjust to the hectic life of a college student. Some are quicker to adapt than others.

"Adjusting wasn't hard at all. You always hear that adjusting to college is so hard, but so far it's been pretty easy," said Voljevica. "That's just as of right now. I hope it doesn't get harder."

"Most of orientation was pretty relevant. Most people didn't go, but I think it was actually helpful."

-Chad Agosti



Taylor Foiles

Sky Eats Airplane played at Forward Hall on Thursday, mixing Electronica Hardcore and Indie.

Sky Eats Airplane melds old and new at Forward Hall

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It's not very often that a band boasts mixing Electronica, Indie and Hardcore. It's not very often that a laptop is on stage running a light arrangement at a hardcore show. It's not very often that a venue is packed on a Thursday night. It's even less often that all these things happen in Erie.

Well, all three of those things came together to create an unlikely but outstanding concert at Forward Hall on Thursday. Local bands Denzel, Silence the Sanity and History's End kicked off the night, playing the same generic hardcore that the weird kid with shaggy hair and girl pants from your High School listened to.

There was a decent turnout for the evening, with concertgoers being forced to sit in the balcony sections of Forward Hall to be able to see the bands. With little room on the floor, it was unusual for such a large number of people to come out on a Thursday night.

The large turnout is a good sign for the local music scene and Forward Hall, which has recently come under new management. Previously, shows would generate small turnouts, despite having popular acts on the bill. High ticket prices were to blame - a result of the management of Forward Hall charging a steep rental price. With new management in place, ticket costs are hovering around or below the ten dollar mark.

Two touring bands headlined the show. A Skylit Drive from Lodi, California and Sky Eats Airplane from Fort Worth, Texas.

A Skylit Drive took the stage first, playing nothing

you couldn't hear coming from the speakers at a Hot Topic store. The Californian sextet really did nothing new, playing soft part followed by heavy part with little variation. Despite having a member dedicated solely to electronics, A Skylit Drive failed to accomplish the originality and genre-blending of Sky Eats Airplane.

Between bands at concerts it's common to see members of bands carrying their guitars and amplifiers on stage. What isn't common is seeing band members carry light fixtures and computers on stage. Throughout Sky Eats Airplane's set, the group had a computer running which managed not only the lighting, but also contributed to the music. It's not very often a band boasts mixing Electronica Indie and Hardcore, but that bragging is for good reason.

While Sky Eats Airplane was performing, there were times I felt like I was at a rave listening to techno. Other times I was getting screamed at with loud guitars piercing my ears to a slow tempo. And a few times I felt like I was at a normal rock show, with great singing, clean guitars and a fast beat.

Somehow, Sky Eats Airplane was able to mix a diverse range of musical styles together perfectly. You could say if eighties metal met up with nineties emo and invited over two thousand's electronica, the result would be Sky Eats Airplane.

Sky Eats Airplane just released their self-titled second album on Equal Vision Records. The quintet just finished a stint on the Vans Warped Tour and are now on another nation-wide tour, with dates featuring Senses Fail in October. If you have an open mind give Sky Eats Airplane a listen, there's nothing else like it.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Week of Aug 29-Sept 4

Friday August 29

Friday Night Soccer
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Erie Hall Gymnasium

Sunday August 31

Men's Varsity Soccer
Game
2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday August 30

Women's Varsity Soccer
Game
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Catholic Mass
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Smith Chapel

Monday Sept 1

Labor Day
No Classes

Men's Varsity Soccer
Game
2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday Sept 4

Club Rush
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
McGarvey Commons

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TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR ALL THREE OF THESE SHOWS AT INK ASSASSINS TATOO at the corner of 26th and Peach Street as well as online at erieshows.indietickets.com. Keep an eye on the webpage for 2 shows still to be announced this fall! Hell Yeah