

# CAMPUS NEWS

## Growth

from page 1.

academic sectors of the university. For other departments, however, technology can be utilized in many other ways.

Andrea Konkol, an admissions counselor, keeps a constant eye on developing modes of communications to market to perspective students.

Dave Christiansen, an Associate Dean at Behrend, generally directs the e-learning section, where online segments of courses are integrated into regular class schedules.

Ron Hoffman, who directs the Computer Center and is the Manager of Information Technology services at Behrend, works to increase capabilities and efficiency of current equipment, while watching out for the needs of the academic community at the college.

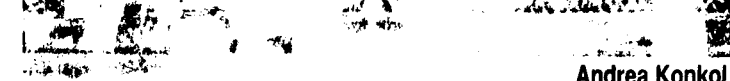
While the effort to use modern technology comes down to several different departments, the effort to maximizing the utility of these emerging tools is a University-wide project.

### Technology as a Marketing Tool

In the last 70 days as of publication date, the amount of adults 35 or older on Facebook has doubled. As adults join an ever-growing network of millions online, schools are increasingly trying to figure out ways to use the new social networking revolution to market to perspective students.

Ms. Konkol, who has worked as an admissions counselor for eight years, says that Behrend started using Facebook to appeal to students by creating groups for incoming classes.

**"Look, this is the world of our students. Why would we want to sanitize their world?"**



Andrea Konkol  
Admissions Counselor

The group for the "Class of 2012" has 620 members, while the "Class of 2013" group already has 378. Often, she says, students will join the groups to attain a better idea of whether or not they want to go to the college. Groups with students that already attend the university (like the one for this year's freshmen) often morph into pure discussion boards containing threads on paintball, sports and intramurals, or requests for roommates.

"These groups also allow us to get a good idea on what students want," Konkol says.

"There were a ton of groups this year dealing with snowboarding - where students get their equipment repaired, trips to [Peek 'n Peak], where they buy new equipment that allows us to get a better bead on what students care about."

Konkol has also started a Twitter account for Admissions, which only has 44 followers. This, she says, is partly due to the fact that it only started last month, and there hasn't been much of an effort in getting the word out.

One of the most successful additions to the digital marketing coming out of Admissions this year has been the utilization of a student blog, written by Jennifer Villarroel, which has over 1100 hits. Located at [jov5021.wordpress.com](http://jov5021.wordpress.com), it features an "inside scoop" of Behrend.

"Lots of students have seen the blog and told me, 'That's exactly what I was looking for,'" Konkol says. The blog is not officially connected to Penn State, and does not go to the Admissions department for review before publication, but has gotten great reviews from incoming students. Villarroel's most recent post is one dealing with what students at Behrend generally do during weekends or in time off.

Though there has been very little negative feedback to Behrend's attempt to market the college with digital communications, there have arisen several problems with the site, including the censoring of feedback.

Konkol says that she refuses to censor things like Behrend-made Facebook pages. "Look, this is the world of our students," she says. "Why would we want to sanitize their world?"

The world of students, though, is quickly becoming a

world shared by all. "It's sort of to the point where if I search for a business on Google, and they don't have a website, I get frustrated," Konkol says. "And now, a lot of students search for a business or school on Facebook, and if they don't have a page, the students feel frustrated too."

And the best thing about using social networking?

"It's free," says Konkol. "We still will use traditional ways like print, radio, or a website, but these new elements can be laid on top of those with very little cost, and it has been very successful."

Despite the challenges with



Computers on campus will be receiving substantial upgrades through 2010.

MARCUS YEAGLEY, The Behrend Beacon

### Technology as an Academic Tool

While a more in-depth look at how academics are utilizing technology to enhance classroom learning will be printed in next week's issue, it's worth a look to see how Behrend is investing in new ideas and strategies to help the college grow intellectually.

One of the biggest additions to Behrend's technical "arsenal," says Dave Christiansen, an Associate Dean at Behrend, has been the advent of "e-learning."

"We've been introducing teachers to online e-learning tools," he says. "These usually have an online component, making them what we call a hybrid class. About ten to twenty percent of our classes have this online component in some degree."

Wayne Anderson, who heads up the e-learning initiative at Behrend under the director of Christiansen, says that the highest priority is first finding out what is needed, then finding what technology can get the university to that point.

"My role is to support faculty in order to help them teach online," he says. "A lot of my time goes to workshops to show teachers what is out there. Those tend to be a blend of 'why do it' and 'what's available.'"

Much of the rest of his time, he says, goes towards creating courses online. "We need to make sure that they have quality that is equal to or better than a face to face course," says Anderson, who was involved in creating at least three online courses. "It's not just something you can throw up there. To be able to make a high-quality course at the Penn State standard is very time consuming and challenging."

Despite the challenges with

creating hybrid elements and integrating them into current courses, Anderson sees courses with an online portion growing. "Nationally, it's growing significantly still," he says. "Penn State has lots of resources, and is very advanced technologically, so it's very easy to expand."

Students who are just starting at Behrend should look out for increased quality in online components, and an increased use of digital elements. Feedback for quality of these elements will come from built-in surveys, focus groups, and will also pull in statistics from national studies.

Both Anderson and Todd Say, a manager at the Computer Center, have an interest in increasing possibilities for collaborative group projects online. The challenge comes from finding a program that meets the standards of any program, and is easy to learn. "We don't want students to spend all their time learning how to use a tool," says Anderson. "Rather, we want them to spend their time using it to help them learn."

Say thinks that the project will likely resemble the "P Drive" currently available to students by providing an online collaborative storage space that groups will be able to access. "The Computer Center has seen the need and drive from faculty and students for that," he says. "It will probably be something 'home-grown,' that the University or some of its students can make."

### Emerging technologies and improvements at Behrend

Ron Hoffman and Todd Say at the Computer Center define one of their top priorities as improving the capacities and efficiency of current technology, rather than simply adding

more.

Much like the e-learning initiative, much of what the Computer Center does is dictated by the needs of faculty. "We don't go out looking for new technology," Hoffman says. "We don't want to grab something just because it's brand new. If it just came out, we don't necessarily immediately need it in our labs."

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Ron Hoffman

Manager, Computer Center

Aside from following faculty use, though, increasing efficiency and going "green" have rounded out the schedules of Computer Center employees.

"Thin client blade technology," which runs an operating system from a server as opposed to running it from a local tower, is something that Behrend has already utilized. The Computer Center plans to expand use of these, especially in some more of the REDC labs. While it will help with space and energy conservation, it will also assist the college in increasing its efficiency of current space. Long-run, it can also save some significant costs in energy, too.

Making Behrend more energy-efficient will also mean that any and all new equipment will be EnergyStar compliant, meaning that it must meet government-set regulations on energy use. Behrend and the Computer Center will need to evaluate some current processes to see where additional conservation can occur; right now, computers must be turned on at all times in order to allow for updates, and for the convenience of students using the lab.

There could be a possibility that a process could be used to shut down computers while in non-use, and start them back up for updates and upon usage.

Also, students should expect an upgrade to Windows 7 in the summer of 2010. "The plan was Vista in the summer of 2008," says Hoffman. Due to problems with the operating

system, he says, a move was made back to Windows XP. Again, the dictation to switch to the new operating system will likely come from the faculty at Behrend, which has dramatically different needs than University Park.

A project that the Computer Center made outside of faculty instruction was the new "Cyberlounge" in Hammermill. Say calls the cyberlounge a response to student need, rather than a response to staff. "Students wanted a place to relax," he says. "We think that the cyberlounge provides that and also provides a check Facebook, or e-mail."

The Computer Center is looking at plans to redo the ground floor of the library to create a cyberlounge type atmosphere. That project will likely heavily involve the staff of the Lilley Library, which Hoffman describes as very enthusiastic to the change. Also on the horizon will be a shift in Reed, where the heavily-used kiosks on the bottom floor will be moved up to the second floor balcony outside of Bruno's Cafe.

## Academic affairs to change advising system

By Rachel Reeves  
editor in chief  
rcr5057@psu.edu

Academic Affairs has been receiving numerous complaints from students about Behrend's academic advising system. Matthew Foulk and Steven Burger, involved in the Academic Affairs Committee of the Student Government Association, have decided to make some changes.

Right now, "advisors have the option of a training session," says Foulk. The problem is that it is optional, not mandatory. As a result, some advisors can miss information, and the process can become more complicated for students. Foulk and Burger would like to see an online module set up in order to provide another element to the advising system. "The best thing we can do is set up an online module to help students," says Burger.

Burger says that the point of the module is to be a last resort for students who are having

trouble with their advisors. "It's not meant to replace advisors," says Burger. "If they have questions, the module is for when they can't see their advisor."

Foulk and Burger say that the Division of Undergraduate Studies is excited about the new idea. "They're very enthusiastic, and they want to help as much as possible," says Burger. Behrend's website is potentially being upgraded soon, and if that were the case Burger hopes to get prominent placement on the site for the module. "We don't want anyone to have to dig to access it," says Burger.

The two students have "big plans" for the module. They are looking into a basic downloadable link with structure similar to a Powerpoint. Burger says that they will meet with the Division of Undergraduate Studies to continue work on the project.

"We hope to have our ideas on the table by the end of the year," says Burger.

## Greeks

from page 1.

hosting the event were not allowed to know who received awards until the event itself.

"We didn't know anything. I knew I was presenting when I got here, but I didn't know what I was saying until I went up there to read it."

This year, many individuals were recognized for outstanding efforts. Todd Ericson, 2008-2009 President of the Interfraternity Council, and Lauren Brake, 2008-2009 President of the Panhellenic Council, announced a few of the awards given out at the ceremony. The Most Valuable Chapter Member Award was given to Todd Ericson of Delta Chi and Elizabeth Warheit of Alpha Sigma Tau.

The Outstanding Alumni/ae Programming Award was given to the Alpha Sigma Alpha and Delta Chi organizations. The Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award was presented to Patty McMann who currently advises the sisters of Alpha Sigma Alpha. The chapters that received the Highest Chapter Grade Point Average Award were Theta Phi Alpha and Sigma Tau Gamma. The Highest New Member

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Lauren Brake  
Senior

Class Grade Point Average Award was given to Alpha Sigma Alpha and Sigma Tau Gamma. The Outstanding Sorority and Fraternity Leadership Awards were presented to Alpha Sigma Alpha and Kappa Delta Row, respectively. The Greek Spirit Award was awarded to Lauren Brake.

Lauren Brake expressed her apparent enthusiasm towards her personal victory and her sorority's accomplishments. "I put in a lot of effort because I feel like the organizations deserve a lot of effort to be put in. Everything I have done has been for the betterment of the community. It's hard not to get energized around these girls. Everyone does so much. Winning and even being recognized is an honor in itself. Winning meant a lot to me because Greek life means a lot to me."

To continue with the awards, the 2008 Greek Week Winners were Theta Phi Alpha and Kappa Delta Row. The Sorority Recruitment Excellence Award was presented to the Alpha Sigma Tau organization. The Fraternity Recruitment

Excellence Award was presented to the brothers of Kappa Delta Row. The Outstanding Individual in Community Service and Philanthropy Award was rightfully awarded to Jessica Lynch of Alpha Sigma Alpha. The Outstanding Individual Community Service Project Award went to the Alpha Sigma Tau and Delta Chi organizations. The Outstanding Individual Philanthropy Project Award went to the Greek organizations of Alpha Sigma Tau and Delta Chi. The Outstanding Individual Philanthropy Project Award went to the Greek organization of Theta Phi Alpha. The Overall Excellence in Community Service Award went to Delta Chi and Alpha Sigma Alpha. The Overall Excellence in Philanthropy Award went to Alpha Sigma Tau. The Outstanding New Member Education Program Award went to Alpha Sigma Tau and Kappa Delta Row. The Outstanding New Member Award went to Alpha Sigma Tau's Sonia Rosales and Kappa Delta Row's Bryan Monroe.

The Outstanding Fraternity and Sorority Athlete Award went to Karen Hobaugh of Theta Phi Alpha. The Outstanding Brotherhood and Sisterhood Awards went to Kappa Delta Row and Alpha Sigma Alpha, respectively. The Christopher L. Rizzo Friend of Greek Life Award was given to Lindsey Hopkins Hall. The Most Improved Chapter Award was awarded to the Greek organization of Kappa Delta Row. Last, but certainly not least, the Outstanding Greek Man and Woman Awards were presented to Paul Nick of Delta Chi and Lauren Brake of Theta Phi Alpha, respectively.

In response to receiving his award, Paul Nick stated his enthusiasm. "It was very exciting [to receive the Greek Man of the Year award]. A lot of the time we try to act selfless, and we try to make sure our chapter is doing well for the benefit of all the new guys coming in. It's exciting to get recognized. I put in a lot of hours. This is my second term as President of my chapter. I have a lot of ideas for the Second time coming in."