

PERSPECTIVES

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Why I don't like Scale Up



By Neil J. Peters
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Jan. 30, 2009

It is a relatively well-known fact that Engineering is a pretty difficult major. From the asinine amount of math that students have to trudge through to the cavalcade of generic science classes that never seem to stop, engineering is obviously no walk in the park. This was the understanding of what to expect that each engineering student accepted when we filled out the application. However, little did any of us know that we would be expected to teach ourselves an impossibly difficult subject with little to no help from faculty and battle the most vile curriculum ever designed. Such is the tragic reality that is Scale Up Physics.

For those blessed students who are not familiar with the abysmal hell that is Scale Up, allow me to enlighten you through the magic of metaphor. Imagine walking into a classroom on the first day of the semester. Upon entering, you are immediately hog-tied, gagged and tossed into a pool of boiling water, only to find that the pool has been fully stocked with an assortment of vicious sharks and a very large squid.

Bear in mind that the only weapon you have to fight your way out with is the very basic

crap that you learned back in high school. This horrific daydream is essentially what happens to a Scale Up student's self-esteem on a daily basis.

There are no lectures, class discussions, or anything that is remotely helpful to a student's education. Instead, the bewildered students are given impossible busywork that is poorly worded, hardly proof-read and about as enjoyable as being lathered in bacon grease and heaved into a cage of severely pissed off Wolverines. Sound good yet? But wait, there is more. In addition to having to teach yourself from a text book that is longwinded, overcomplicated, and as poorly written as the busy work, students must complete online homework which is also packed full of ambiguously phrased questions that require a perfect answer which isn't even accepted half the time anyway. Did you just do three hours of excellent work only to have your answer be one thousandth of a percent off and be thrown out? Yes? Then too bad! Enjoy your clinical depression with a side order of insecurity, because this happens every day.

An outside observer may wonder: "Why don't you just correct your answer and enter it again?" The problem is that it will not tell you what is wrong and just leaves you hanging at the front door like a bad date. Confounded students also have the option of posting questions on

the problems forum. However, this is only about as helpful as Dell Tech Support staff, because how helpful can they be if the only other people who post things are other students who don't understand it either?

Some readers may think I am being slightly over dramatic, however, please understand that with the course load an engineering student has to take, it is tough to balance time that you don't have. If any reader doubts my claim, then I challenge you to ask any engineering student about Scale Up and they will spin a similar tale of misery and woe.

Second semester engineer Emily Harrington said, "Scale Up is really a great idea. It asks students to use a discovery method to learn about basic physics concepts. However, this great idea is only great on paper. In reality, everyone can't learn this way, which is what makes the class more difficult than it should be. It would help if the professors would at least introduce some of the material at first, then turn us loose in the labs. Otherwise, we are a herd of lost sheep wanderings aimlessly about the physics realm, unsure of the magnitude of our direction."

Scale Up has a lot of potential to be a good system, however, as of right now it is loose, misguided and a flimsy way to run a science class. I know that I will eventually learn something in Physics 211, but right now I'd much rather wrestle a rabid badger than take that class.

I am a football virgin



By Jennifer Juncosa
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Sept. 29, 2008

There is a chick-flick from 1999 about a 25-year-old reporter that had never been kissed. She goes to high school again as an undercover reporter and falls for one of the teachers. The teacher decides to move because he fell in love with a girl he thought was a student. In her article she writes about how she has never been kissed, asks him to forgive her, meet her at the pitcher's mound at the championship baseball game and kiss her. Needless to say, he comes at the last minute and kisses her.

Now, I have been kissed, but I haven't engaged in something most people my age have: I have never been to a football game, more importantly, a college football game. Embarrassing, I know. I spent most my childhood watching live baseball games but only watched football on television. Then I came to college and came across a problem: It's ridiculously hard to get tickets to Penn State games.

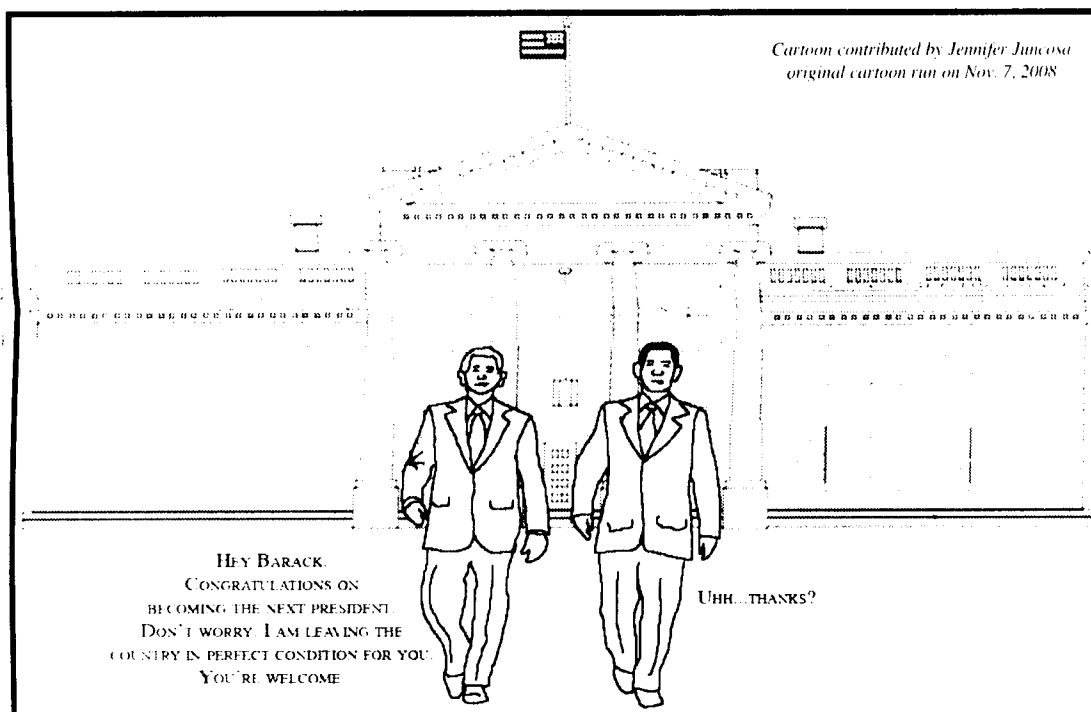
I admit this with a load of shame. I picked a school known for football. But let me assure that I do

want to go to a football game-I have never had the opportunity. Who wouldn't?

There is the one man worth going to the game for: Joe Paterno. The head coach for the past four decades and change, the only one that can still pull off Reeboks and rolled up Khakis. There is the reputation of exceptional players, Paul Posluzny and Derrick Williams, that strike fear in opposing teams. Then there is the student section that ESPN magazine calls the best in the nation, the loudest and most proud. I regret never experiencing this.

I realize that not being a part of the football experience has left my friends hanging their heads in disbelief and my brothers, Penn State alumni, feeling nothing but shame. This year I will go to a game. I planned my first time to be the Michigan game this October but with the price of tickets climbing rapidly and the fact that the ticket my brother offered at a reduced price was given to his girlfriend, my life-long dream is slowly dissolving.

So, I propose this: I will be sitting in the lower level of the Reed Union building every Friday afternoon for the rest of the season. I ask that anyone willing to give their ticket to a good cause, meet and help me fulfill my dream. Help me experience my school the way I should.



Cartoon contributed by Jennifer Juncosa
original cartoon run on Nov. 7, 2008



Cartoon contributed by Jennifer Juncosa
original cartoon run on Sept. 19, 2008

Bored? Entertain yourself

By Jeff Kramer
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Oct. 24, 2008

Hi. My name is Jeff Kramer, and I'm from Vermont. We do cool things in Vermont, like hang out, listen to Dispatch, listen to Phish, hang out, and swim. This column is for all the flat-landers from Pennsylvania so that they can understand how awesome it is in the Green Mountain State. Things are green, it snowed this week, and the leaves are all changing.

In Vermont, some people think there isn't much to do. We find ways to entertain ourselves. Some say it sucks, but what are they looking for? You can find people unsatisfied with their situation who say, "there's nothing to do here." Most of the time, there is something to do, but people are either too lazy or aren't creative enough to think of something.

What those people don't realize is that what they are looking for isn't out there. You have to make your own situation. My 9th grade friend told me that only the bored get bored. He's right. There's always something to do, even if it looks like there's absolutely nothing. I stay on campus every weekend and find something to do.

Here is an example of an invented activity: a college in my town hosted the strangest event I've seen in a while. Middlebury College, a small-town school that is so prestigious it turned down Ivy League status, had a day of quidditch, like, Harry Potter quidditch.

In 2005, a few students decided to take the rules out of the books, write up a set of rules for real life, and put out fliers. The whole town showed up. Teams put on capes, tossed around dodgeballs, and ran around with brooms in between their legs. The snitch was a distance runner

from the track team dressed in gold with a stuffed sock hanging out of the back of his shorts. The snitch and the two seekers could run at the beginning of the match and go anywhere on campus, and they did. If you search for "quidditch Middlebury" on YouTube, there's a 10 minute video. It sounds silly on paper, but when you watch it, it's totally serious. Look up the video, you won't be disappointed. Maybe that's just me; I love Harry Potter. Don't judge me.

Next time you're bored and complaining about nothing to do, find something. Learn to play hacky sack, get into some new bands, do something you've been meaning to do, install StumbleUpon on your internet browser, go for a jog, or read Wikipedia. Maybe I'm just easy to entertain because I have giant bouts of Attention Deficit Disorder, but most people I hang out with share my sentiment.

Left out of the loop

We're sure you've heard the rumors about the recent RA firings. We're also sure that you haven't heard much else.

As you may have read, the students who were let go by Residence Life have stronger privacy protection than usual since their case is being handled through the university. Because of FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the administration is not allowed to release any information that could identify these students. This not only includes names, but any facts that could be pieced together to identify a student, like the location and time of an incident.

Protecting a student's privacy is important. But it is also important to let students know about major changes on campus, especially within the buildings that they call home for the better part of the year.

Most students who lost an RA this week discovered it simply by walking past the empty dorm rooms. Some residents even found that there was no RA in their entire residence hall. While RAs from other halls made sure that every building was covered as far as nightly rounds are concerned, the residents were

still unsupervised from midnight on.

The residents should have some information. This doesn't mean that they need to be told the whole story, complete with names and details, but they should at least be notified of a change of this proportion. It is important for a resident to know that if they have a question, a problem or even an emergency, that they will have to leave the building for assistance.

It is not fair for a student to witness these changes in their own halls and not be told that the school has it under control. It is not safe when residents who have no RA in their building are not told that if they need help, they will have to go elsewhere. The school can release at least this much information without betraying anyone's privacy.

Student Affairs has done an excellent job at protecting the rights of the students who have violated their Resident Assistant contracts. But when it comes to the safety of students who have done nothing wrong, perhaps they have been neglectful.

Rachel Reeves, Editor-in-chief
original run on Sept. 5, 2008.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Year-in-review
- Passing the torch
- End of the year parties
- Summer

Submission Guidelines:

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run it.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty or administration position, and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 8 p.m. Wednesday night for inclusion in the Friday issue.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication. Please keep complaints as specific as possible.

Email submissions to jdj5061@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Picking articles for this issue
- Passing the torch
- Finals week
- Summer classes