

THE PROFESSOR'S CORNER

A bailout for higher education?

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lecturer in economics

A recent Erie Times-News article warned of "More Budget Worries Ahead for Penn State."

Apparently, \$6,800 per semester per student (much more for out of state students), plus funding from the state and stimulus money from the federal government, are simply not enough to keep this great institution afloat.

Amazing, considering that employees got no raise in 2009 and will probably get none in 2010 either. (Don't worry about me - I don't live paycheck-to-paycheck).

The article states that Penn State has an enrollment of 94,300. At \$13,600 annually per student (assuming all are in-state), that works out to over \$1.2 TRILLION per year, not including government bailouts or the billions made on football weekends (just from bottled

water and parking). That number is just slightly below President Obama's 2009 budget deficit and the projected deficit for 2010.

To further put this in perspective, the tuition for my spring semester in 1982 was \$382.

I understand inflation, but has an education at Penn State improved by almost eightfold in the last 20 years? That is an almost 1,700% increase for those of you keeping track at home.

So what exactly is the problem?

The school blames it on the pension system and health care expenses. But it's hard to believe that that alone could account for these severe monetary problems.

I think it might be time to start looking in other places.

This is not simply a Penn State problem. College students in California are already rioting over proposed tuition in-

creases, and I'm sure these huge cost increases are common to all major institutions of learning.

Is it just me, or has anyone else noticed that these costs began to skyrocket as soon as the government got involved? The government decided that EVERYONE should be able to get a college education, and suddenly costs are out of this world.

Let's see a show of hands - how many people think that a student with a 2.0 GPA will be able to pay off a \$70,000 student loan debt in his/her lifetime? Yep. That might be part of the problem.

Still, you really have to marvel at the ability of the government to wreck everything it touches.

The government gets involved in education and suddenly no one can afford it.

The government starts a retirement system for its citizens,

and it goes bankrupt (but Bernie Madoff will be proud).

The government provides healthcare via Medicare and Medicaid, and both are bankrupt.

The government runs a monopoly on the delivery of first-class mail, and it loses billions.

The government decides to make homes affordable to all Americans, and the entire banking system is destroyed.

Maybe it's time we started getting government less involved in business. How many industries does the government need to destroy before we realize that maybe it is not that good at running things?

President Obama said recently that Americans no longer trust the government to do anything right or to get anything done.

If true, then maybe it's time for less government rather than more.

MY VOICE

Our oxymorons

There are a lot of contradictions in life.

People use contradictory terms, also known as oxymorons, like act naturally, same difference, and no comment (after all, the person is giving a comment).

We see examples of it everywhere, whether it is the double-chinned, potbellied lady at McDonald's scarfing down double cheeseburgers, talking about cutting carbs and losing weight, or listening to semi-athletic white guys like myself talk about sports and which athletes are the best.

Even here at Behrend, I see a bunch of contradictions and things that just don't add up. Here are my top three.

1. Tan girl in the winter:

Everyone loves a little color, but with the harsh Erie winters, it would be more logical to see red, rosy cheeks.

But it seems like the more I walk around campus, the more I see orange. A lot of female college students like to go tanning in the winter, and that's their choice.

However, they do stick out among the white snow, and it's even worse when they look like they escaped from Willy Wonka's Factory.

I'm not suggesting that everyone should take a tip from the Twilight movies and be pasty white. I'm just saying that there's a difference between a little bronze and Oompa-Loompa orange.

2. Gatorade for the lazy guys:

In almost all of the vending machines around campus, there's water, pop and Gatorade. While water has its benefits and pop has its downsides, Gatorade is what seems most contradictory.

It seems that most often people are drinking Gatorade when they are doing nothing. Gatorade is intended for consumption during physically active occasions.

I'll admit to grabbing a Gatorade a few hours after playing basketball, but often times the guy drinking the Gatorade looks like he couldn't tell the difference between a baseball and a medicine ball.

3. Say one thing, do another:

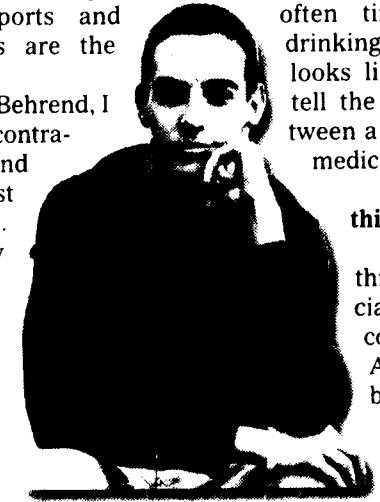
I'm guilty of this myself, especially when it comes to classes.

About a week before a test comes up, I tell myself and those around me that I plan on studying throughout

the week. I put it off for a day or two, whether it's for watching SportsCenter or writing my article.

Eventually, it gets to the point where it's nine at night the day before the test, and I've glanced at my notes for all of three seconds. I frantically cram in studying for the next few hours and am usually able to get a B on the test.

Of course, I tell myself that I'll study harder for the next exam. Or, that I'll write my article a little bit earlier next week. Will I continue on my path of saying that I'll do something and then doing something completely contradictory? No comment.



BRANDON BOYD
Senior Writer

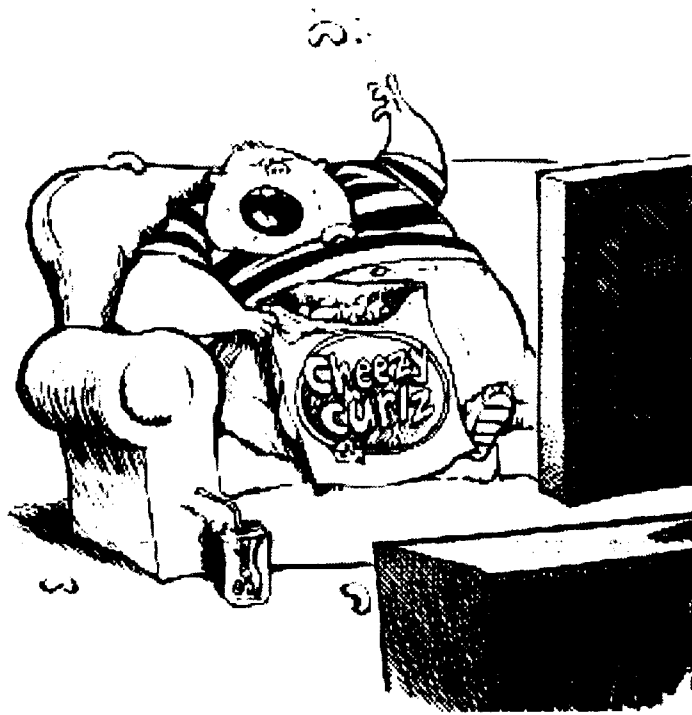
The SPORT of "CURLING"

IN THE OLYMPICS

IN THE UNITED STATES



Illustration by [Signature]



Letters to the Editor
Send us a letter at opinion@psu.edu
Submissions must be shorter than 350 words.
All submissions will be printed as written.

RE: Last week's Letter to the Editor

I appreciate Mr. Goetz's concern regarding current SGA projects and our priorities. I want to assure you that SGA is currently working on more than renaming a road. SGA operates and does most of its work through a committee system, and Governmental Affairs, the group working on the project, is only one of nine of these. Part of the problem is that it is not nearly as exciting to hear about projects being developed that are in their early stages. The renaming project has come to fruition and is why it is currently being publicized.

Ideally, this project will serve two functions. First, by renaming the road, we hope to strengthen school spirit. Renaming a road, while minor, serves as a stepping stone to make the campus a little more prideful. Second, and perhaps most importantly, we will need to work with the Harborcreek Township Supervisors to accomplish this. Jordan Road, the road which Mr. Goetz hoped for sidewalks on, is owned and maintained by them. Since I began attending Behrend, sidewalks have been a goal but have always been held up because of this fact. We are taking things in a new direction by starting with the renaming project and establishing a working relationship between the Board of Supervisors and Behrend students. After this project has been successfully completed, I hope that we can approach the Board with the working relationship that we create and use it to deal with the sidewalk issue.

The SGA is not only focused on this, however, as there are a number of things being worked on behind the scenes that not all students may be informed of.

Our Student Affairs committee is working on, among other things, getting a DVD Vending Kiosk, like Redbox, at our campus.

The Diversity committee has hosted events that are showcasing different lifestyles to students and will be bringing The Human Race Machine later this semester.

The Budget Committee continually allocates thousands of dollars for club use; and the Academic Affairs Committee is currently finishing its work on The Student Bill of Rights, a document which will outline different policies, steps to take, and rights that students have within the University but may not realize.

SGA, I assure you, is not allowing harder projects to fall by the wayside. We are working within our means to strengthen our campus. If we were to solely lobby for things such as a new Residence Hall or focus on things which are completely infeasible like a second entrance to campus, we would be wasting our time and the possibility of change for those whom we represent. Furthermore, if you have any question or want more information on what the SGA is doing, please don't hesitate to contact me.

ROBERT MOELLER
history major

BRAD KOVALCIK
SGA President

MY VOICE

Killing grammar

Throughout every year of high school, you probably had to take an English course.

When you got to college, your major required that you take at least two more English courses. We take all of these courses, yet every day I hear people using words incorrectly.

I'm not an English major or anything of that sort. These are just common things that everyone knows; and still, we use words wrong.

I just don't get it. We spend all these hours sitting in English, so why not just use the information you learn so you don't look unintelligent?

My biggest issue is with the word "seen." I do not understand how so many people can use this word incorrectly.

You cannot "seen" someone. You "saw" someone. I see this most often in text messaging. To most people, hearing someone say they "seen" someone doesn't even sound right. It really does make you look uneducated.

Another word that is often used incorrectly is "ignorant." You always hear "ignorant" being used in place of "rude."

They do not mean the same thing. Someone being ignorant has to do with a person having a lack of knowledge towards a subject. "Rude" is when someone says something that is out of line or impolite.

I live at University Gate Apartments and I'm pretty sure we all know what goes on there during the weekends.

When people tell stories

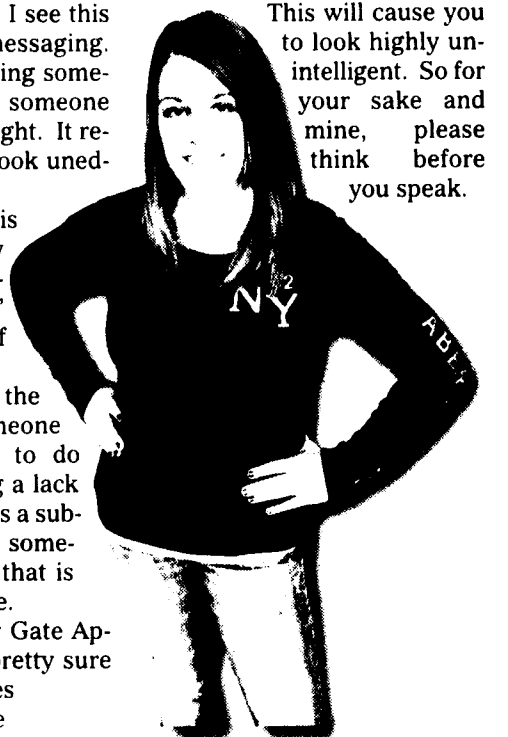
about the U-Gates Apartments you will often hear, "I was so belligerent this weekend," when in reality they mean that they were just extremely intoxicated.

Belligerent is defined as, "warlike; given to waging war." This has nothing to do with being very intoxicated. If you were actually really intoxicated and fighting people then you use the term correctly.

People always say it doesn't matter what they say in normal conversation because it is just with their friends.

In reality though, after so long it will become a habit, and you won't be able to control it. Therefore, when you go to an interview or something important, you will more than likely still speak incorrectly.

This will cause you to look highly unintelligent. So for your sake and mine, please think before you speak.



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