

Could Behrend grow to 10,000 students?

Some Behrend administrators think it might be possible. How would such an expansion affect the basic services that Behrend offers? If it were possible, what would need to happen to make it work?

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Administrators cite the growing number of people that stay at Behrend for four years as motivation for expanding the University.



stay at Behrend for four years
(estimated)

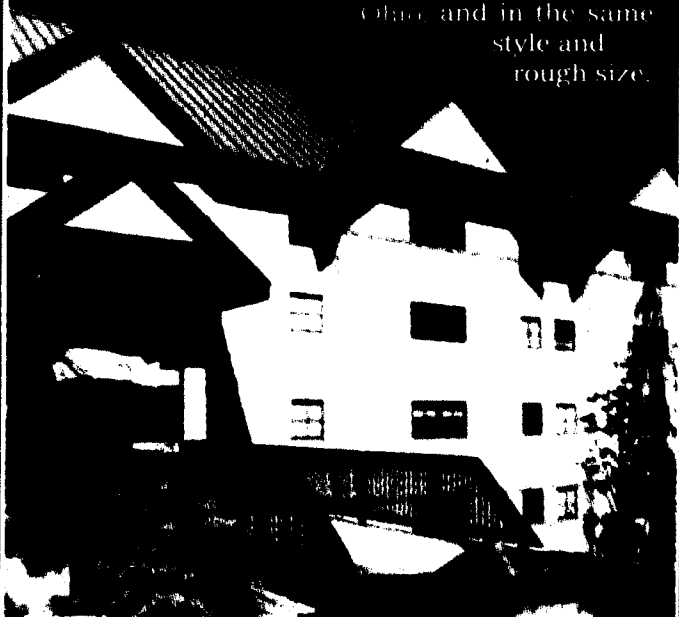
The Behrend Beacon
Estimate based on percentage of students who start their college career at Behrend

Trippe Hall

If Behrend were to grow substantially, Trippe Hall would play an essential role. Originally planned to be built alongside Almy and Ohio, the project was scrapped in order to renovate Perry Hall.

However, Trippe is again on the horizon for Penn State Behrend. It was identified as a target for housing capital in the college's Strategic Plan which is effective through the 2012-2013 year.

The building could be built near Almy and Ohio and in the same style and rough size.



Pictured: Almy Hall. If built according to original plans, Trippe Hall could look very similar to Almy and Ohio Hall.

Penn State Behrend is no stranger to change. In the last decade and a half, it has seen the facilities on campus expand, enrollment skyrocket, and amount of programs increase.

However, the college could soon be entering a period of unprecedented growth.

As soon as next fall, enrollment could increase 300 students in an effort to bring Behrend's total enrollment to 5,000. This effort, dubbed "Project 300" by the Admissions Office, is not just geared to enroll more freshmen but students of all ages and majors.

Chancellor Donald Birx, who began his term at Behrend last summer, has even higher goals for the long term.

In the next five years, Birx said, he hopes to see Behrend reach 7,500 students and potentially grow to 10,000 in the next decade. These numbers do not represent a firm target, but more a paradigm shift and an acknowledgement by the administration that it is in Behrend's best interest to expand into the future. This push for expansion has been in the works for some time, however, with the overall goal of making Behrend a more competitive learning annex nationally and internationally.

To do that, quality must be maintained throughout the expansion, Birx said.

"We want to increase faculty rather than the class sizes. This way there is room for more activities and new programs, but Behrend staff will not lose touch with their students."

David Christensen, Associate Dean, says that expansion could lead to new opportunities for majors at the college.

"There needs to be something for every major," he said. "There is no one size fits all program, so several need to be created and implemented as soon as we can."

To that aim, he said, he is spearheading a curriculum committee comprised of faculty and students to examine new program possibilities.

According to Birx, some of these new programs may include specific studies related to the Fine Arts Center, which is still several years away but represents a goal for the university in expansion.

Part of the effort to bring new programs to Behrend is motivated by

By the numbers: Expanding enrollment

300 Proposed enrollment increase, FA '11	1010 (Estimate) Fall 2010 Freshmen	4,767 (Estimate) Current Enrollment	10,000 Possible long-term enrollment goal
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the fact that the majority of Behrend students now stay at the college for all four years of their education, nearly 70 percent, according to Christensen.

Those who do transfer to University Park, he says, do "exceptionally well" after transferring.

Out of all the state college campuses, Behrend students "other than their high GPAs or increase them [after transferring] better than most."

Many classes will take students out of the desks, too, Birx said.

"Not only do we want to expand physically, but virtually too, with on-line classes," he said. "We also want to offer more traditional mini-sessions in the summer."

Birx feels that the community of Erie is growing around the campus and can absolutely support the changes to come. Behrend owns eight hundred acres surrounding the campus to expand upon.

Such land will absolutely be needed to make more residence halls such as Trippe Hall [see left], which will offset some of the housing concerns of more immediate expansion plans.

Developers are also looking to create more upperclassmen housing on Jordan Road. In later years, more academic buildings will need to be added to campus to accommodate classroom space and faculty office space, which are both already identified problem areas on campus. Out of all of the 23 Commonwealth campuses, Behrend has displayed the largest need for additional classroom space, says Ken Miller, Director of Student Affairs. This could serve to

give Behrend a leg up on competition for University Park funding for new academic buildings. Funding can come from many sources, though, and donations can always speed up that process.

Miller feels that an expansion would allow the university greater ability to recruit students with a quality education experience.

"We are doing things with the students, not for them," he said. "The expansion of Behrend will do fantastic things for our students and our staff."

To that end, he said, student concerns with Behrend must be addressed. While many of those needs have been taken care of recently with renovations to Reed, the upcoming convenience store, and new lounge space, a new fitness center on campus is likely

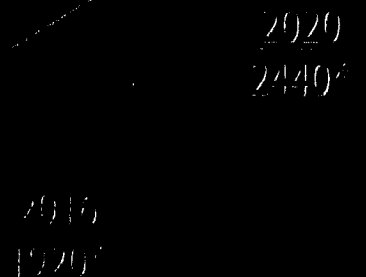
"The expansion of Behrend will do fantastic things for our students and our staff."

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Director of Student Affairs

the next big project. This could be funded with a combination of donor funds, capital funds, and Student Activity Facility Fee funding, which originates from tuition charges.

With the changes to Behrend right around the corner, the students currently attending classes may not recognize the university they attended a decade from now. Take a good look — what's here today may be doubled tomorrow.



What would it take to get to 10,000 in 10 years?

2010

1010

Year freshmen enrollment

These numbers have been projected to show hypothetical freshman enrollment data for a 10-year expansion to 10,000 total students. These numbers are not official and did not originate from the university, and represent only hypothetical, unconfirmed scenarios.

