

Behrend Beacon

Kelly wins

...who elected him?

(Probably not us.)



Student election turnout likely disappointing

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editor-in-chief

Despite the nagging of professors and the earnest appeals of politicians, student voter turnout in this week's election was probably quite low.

Associate professor of political science Robert Speel, who instructs on American elections, says that this is nothing out of the norm for one of the lowest-voting demographics in the country.

However, it is particularly diffi-

cult to measure student participation in polls, because there is no easily trackable voting location on Behrend's campus.

"The Station Road location [at Brookside Fire Station] is far away and impossible to walk to without sidewalks," Speel said in an e-mail following election day. "We have talked to local election officials in the past about getting a polling place on campus, but they say that voter turnout is too low, which is probably true."

The problem, then, is frustrating-

ly cyclical: election officials will not bring a voting location to campus because turnout is low, yet turnout is low because it's too tough for students to get out to the polling places.

Add to that difficulty that, for the first time in several years, there were no rides to the polls provided by either administration at the college or students in organizations. Speel also attributes the low turnout up to an off-year election.

The next election, which is an election for local officials in November 2011, will be even worse, Speel

says.

"Students will be absent from the campus for the May 2011 primary next year," he said in an e-mail. "The election usually gets dismal turnout among our students - five percent or less."

Speel says the solution is to establish support not amongst the students but with the administration.

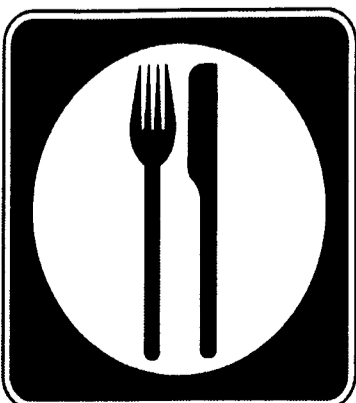
"Administrators are here longer, and promotion of student voting isn't partisan," he said.

"If the school would work with me and student leaders every year

to help students understand why they should register to vote locally and to ... arrange rides to the police place until we have enough voters to get a polling place on campus, we might have more effective results."

Until that happens, he says, any progress with heightening student involvement will only be "temporary."

>> For Full election results, see *Humanities and Social Sciences* on **PAGE 8**



FOOD

Read the debut of our very first food column, "Chow time with Matt."

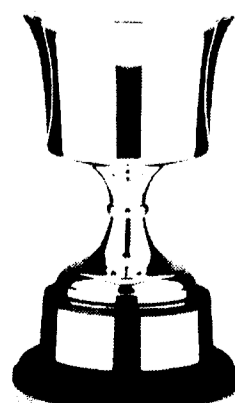
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SEX

Check out "Cravin' Torie", Behrend's first ever sex column.

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SPORTS

All 3 Behrend sports teams who went to AMCC championships place 2nd-- Read the story.

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