

OPINION PAGE

From The Desk Of The Editor

By Dave Jordan
Editor-In-Chief

It's hard to imagine that this term is almost over. This time next week, most of us are going to be relaxing at home, munching out on Mom's cooking, instead of following the nerve-racking routine of hitting the books (sometimes literally), and ingesting Dobbin's food (always literally).

By now, I'm sure that those of us who can afford to make it back next term have paid our bills. Therefore, I'm also sure that everyone was delighted when they noticed that their tuition had been increased. With the economy being what it is today (an extremely overused phrase but it fits), I can understand why the increase might be necessary, but I can't understand why the

University continues to, in my opinion, waste money on petty nonessentials.

Have you noticed the pretty yellow and white lines recently painted on the roads around campus? You know those lines that tell you when you are going off the road or crossing the middle? I could understand the great importance of these lines if Behrend was built around a super ultramodern, four lane highway, but not with the type of roads we have on campus.

A new fence is presently being erected next to the walkway between the RUB and the Faculty Office Building. The purpose of the fence is probably to keep people from walking on the grass. However, I think that in a few

weeks, when ten inches of snowfall hits Behrend, the grass is not going to be getting heavily trampled.

I always wondered why I'd see the men from maintenance raking and vacuuming the leaves on any given day, when the ground would just be covered again the very next day. Would there be any harm if the leaves were cleaned up every few days?

I'm not trying to say that if lines were not painted, fences were not put up, and leaves were not cleaned up everyday, that there would be no need for the tuition hike, but I would feel better paying the extra money if in my opinion, some of it wasn't being wasted.

By the way, good luck with finals.

Faculty Evaluation - Are They Valid?

by Kristen Hartzell
Managing Editor

Escaping most students is the realization that they play a very large role in determining the value and future of both courses and faculty members. When students are asked to fill out faculty evaluations at the end of each term, they must be aware that their slashes, circles, and other marks contribute a great deal to divisional decisions as to whether a course should be continued, or, perhaps more importantly, whether a faculty member should be rehired, granted tenure, or simply "shat upon" by division heads and deans.

The students are led to assume that these are objective evaluations of the teacher's methods, not a subjective means of judging people. This assumption, of course, is a fallacy.

Any student who is asked to "evaluate" a prof or course immediately remembers specifics, which cannot be ignored in an attempt to generalize ten weeks worth of education.

For example, students are requested to complete all items on the evaluation. What does one do, then, when asked to evaluate the "availability of instructor assistance outside of class?" Many things can happen:

10. The student immediately remembers the Monday when he tried for two hours to reach his prof. He may or may not realize that the prof did not have classes or office hours on that day, or he the student may not care. He then is immediately biased by his specific memories—does he rationally sort through his thoughts? I doubt it.

2). He may never have attempted to see the instructor at all. How does he judge "availability"?

The question of "quality of examination" is raised and the student begins to reflect on his exam grades and his reaction to them as he took them. He judges them by what he knew, not what he ought to have known. Thus, the student who did a minimal amount of studying, and received a minimal amount of points is most likely to criticize the quality

of the exams. Very few students, in my opinion, have the objectivity needed to distinguish between their performance and the quality of the exams. Are their answers, then, considered "valid"?

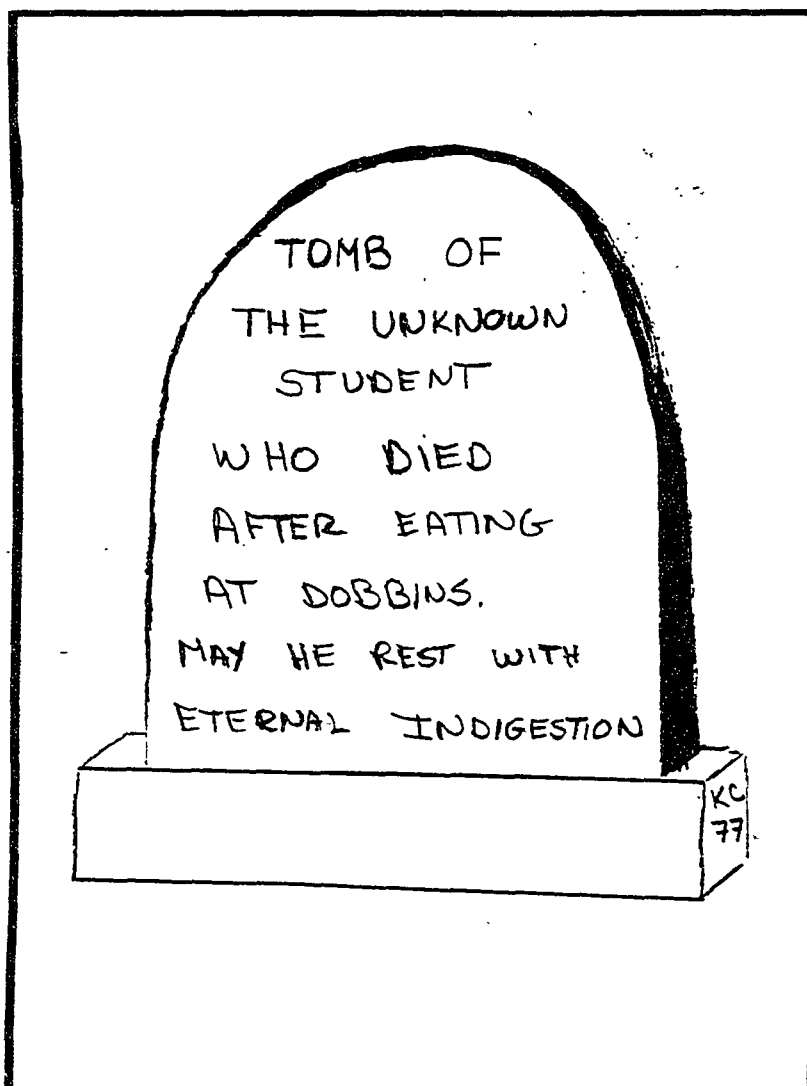
"Pace of the class"—I love it! What administrator decided that this category is objective? I doubt if anyone would argue that a given class is made up of equally intelligent, equally interested students. So one may answer "B" where another may answer "D". But what does "D" mean? Too fast? Too slow? . . . The pace of the class is entirely a subjective opinion of the student, based solely on his ability to flow with the tide of the instruction being given.

I think we should be honest. We are not working with "objective" evaluations. Very few students are familiar with systematic observation; therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between intelligent and emotional

evaluations. We have to allow for a certain amount of subjectivity, but we must also recognize it. Questions like the above should demand explanation; a one-word answer simply won't suffice. The information a student uses to evaluate is important if it is explained. It can only be helpful if it is understood—otherwise, numerous meanings may be inferred, possibly causing a misinterpretation of data. (Heaven forbid! At Behrend?)

One suggestion for eliminating this misinterpretation would be mandatory explanations of answers. Will the fact that these evaluations are sorted by computer override decisions about accuracy?

One final note to students—take these evaluations seriously. If the format is not changed, but continues to be "objective", play Superman and try to be objective. A person's future may be at stake!



Letters

varying viewpoints

Dear Editor:

There once was a chemist who thought she had found the formula for a medium which would create the answers to all of society's problems. She proceeded to mix what she considered to be the proper proportions of the ingredients in a large flask. As she continued along, she thought of the notoriety and respect that would be bestowed upon her, and her head swelled with confidence. She then made a fatal error; she placed a stopper in the flask which contained the already reacting elements. After this was accomplished, she proceeded to sit back and record her observations. It wasn't long before the conglomeration of ingredients started to bubble and boil. As the reaction progressed, it became more and more violent, giving rise to great extremes in behavior. Finally, the flask could contain no more of the violent reaction, and it burst, spewing powerful acids onto the chemist. The chemist was badly burned, and because of the obvious poor judgment that she made, the respect she had sought so deeply to achieve never materialized. So it goes.

Name Witheld
Upon Request
(Editor's Note) K.E.C. Could this be at Behrend?? If so, I hope the

cork gets pulled out before it's too late.

Dear Editor:

Someone is finally giving college students a break! Starting this year, the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (the bus company which provides all bus service in the Erie area) is reducing fares to a quarter during all hours for college students. To get the reduced fare without a hassle, you must show the bus driver your ID, when you pay your fare. Having the ID ready saves time and the bus driver appreciates not having to interrogate every passenger. If you do not produce your ID, you will be charged the regular 35 cent fare during the peak hours. Taking the bus is a convenient, cheap, and safe way to get around town. EMTA schedules are available at the RUB desk.

Dulce Glaz

Dear Editor:

What Behrend College needs is more parties like First Floor Niagara's "Pre-Finals Blowout."

Sue Wortman
(Editor's Note) D.J. I think I agree with you, Sue, but I'm not sure. All recall of that night has been flushed away.

The next issue of the
Collegian will be on your
local newsstand on Dec. 15.
Look for it then!

Editorial Policy

The editorials appearing in this newspaper will be opinionated and therefore subject to criticism. All letters that are typewritten of 200 words or less and submitted to the newspaper staff will be printed with the exception of those that are repetitious or in poor taste. The staff reserves the right to correct

or delete portions of all letters for publication purposes.

All letters must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Term standing, major, and hometown must be included.

Signed columns represent the view of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the Editorial policy of the Behrend Collegian.

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Opinions expressed by the editors and staff of the Behrend Collegian are not necessarily those of the University Administration, faculty, or the student body.

Published every Thursday throughout the Fall, Winter, and Spring Terms, with exclusions for holidays and term breaks.