

Editorial/Opinion

The First Editorial

The C.C. Reader is dedicating this year to promote Campus Community Involvement, School Spirit, and Overall Positive Mental Attitude.

At the beginning of this September, more than 50 organizational leaders and resident assistants attended a student leadership conference at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) along with the Student Affairs staff, faculty advisors, Faculty Council representation, and Administration.

The "PEEC Experience" was educational, fun, and well worth the money. The original goals of the conference were met (student leaders got to: (1) know each other; (2) learn small-group behavior; (3) learn leadership skills; (4) know the Student Affairs staff; and (5) have fun).

Also, PEEC provided the environment for some extremely critical thought and discussion. Organizations had the opportunity to express their problems, rewards, and goals.

Now to the specifics. Everyone is back at Capitol Campus with a whole year ahead of them. What are some common problems? What are some common goals for the upcoming year and beyond? And what are some suggestions to new and returning students and clubs for improving student life at Capitol Campus?

Problems

Problems at Capitol are similar to those at many two-year schools across the nation. It is a suitcase college; there are not many activities and/or involvement in activities; it is a commuter college; there are a wide range of specific interest groups; and there is an annual turnover rate of new student leaders.

The problem of Capitol being a suitcase college reflects that many resident students pack their bags and go home on weekends. This is due to intimate friends at home and a "nothing is going on at school, so why stay here" attitude.

The problem of not many activities and/or involvement in activities at Capitol is difficult to solve. It is a circular problem. Some individuals feel that since there is little involvement in activities, it is not worth the time, effort, and money to sponsor a lot of programs. On the other hand, some individuals feel that if there were more activities, or at least more scheduled activities, there would be more participation.

The problem of being partly a commuter college is that many students have families or jobs before and after classes. These students do not have the time to participate in student activities because of other obligations.

Another problem is that Capitol's student organizations have spread themselves out too thin. As of September 15, 1980, there are 40 student organizations, out of which most are specific interest groups. For example, SAE, IEEE, ITE, PSPE, and ASME are all engineering groups with separate purposes, programs, and funds.

Another Problem is the turnover rate of new student leaders. By the time student leaders learn how to get things done, they don't have any time to do anything -- they graduate. Organizations are inconsistent from year to year. This lack of continuity is due to the turnover.

So much for problems...

Goals

The goals that most student organizations have in common are improved weekend events, renovating the student center, improving the radio station (WNDR), cosponsoring events, and organizing a movies series. Long term goals shared by many organizations include improving communications and the establishment of a common hour.

Improving weekend events will benefit many students by providing entertainment and activities so that students will not have to go home on weekends. After all, the resident students are paying to stay here for ten weeks -- including weekends. They might as well get their money's worth.

The Student Center could play an important role in student activities. Some physical improvement is necessary in addition to a cooperative effort among students to use it. After all, a Student Center should be a STUDENT Center.

WNDR, the radio station of Capitol Campus, is a very important communication medium when operational. However, they cannot transmit due to equipment which is beyond repair. They need financial support as well as personnel and moral support. Once operational, WNDR will continue to be "Your Radio Station" by meeting the music and informational needs of students at Capitol.

Because there are so many organizations, it is beneficial for clubs to cosponsor events rather than sponsor something alone. By cosponsoring events, clubs will have more help at activities, and more students will get to know each other.

Last year student organizations decided to organize and sponsor a movie series. Although the series was a financial disaster, there was a lot of support and ideas for improvement. There are problems associated with running a movie series but there are benefits too. Provided movies are held on a regularly scheduled basis, there should be a small but continuous flow of people to see them.

Communications is important to a campus such as Capitol. Students have to communicate with faculty, staff, administration, and other students. Major student communications are the C.C. Reader, WNDR, SGA, Presidents Council, and a two-monitor video character generation system (to be installed by December). It is necessary that students have the opportunity to improve student communications as a long-term goal and benefit to the campus.

Another long-term goal that is important for the good of campus activities is the establishment of a common hour. There should be a time set aside for various groups of the campus community to share experiences, socialize, study, relax, and/or promote the educational mission of The Pennsylvania State University. This means a schedule change that is not possible to accomplish this year (or maybe even next year). But the establishment of a common hour should still be extremely important in the eyes of student organizations for the future.

Suggestions for Action

In order to improve student life at Capitol, student organizations should be dedicated to (1) common cause (unity), (2) understanding through communication, (3) keeping short-term as well as long-term objectives, (4) service for others, and (5) academic excellence.

Dedication to common cause can be accomplished by working with Presidents Council and the Social Committee, supporting the Student Government Association, writing in the C.C. Reader, and cosponsoring events.

Weekend activities should be cosponsored by several organizations working with Presidents Council and the Social Committee. The best weekend activities for fall are Penn State Football games, Road Rally, New Games Day & Obstacle Course, Car Wash, and Tailgate Parties.

As far as communications is concerned, the C.C. Reader is dedicated to promoting involvement, but can only provide good service when used. Use the C.C. Reader. Support WNDR. Try to understand people who make unpopular decisions (view things from their perspective.)

As long as there is a one year turnover of student leaders at Capitol, long-term objectives must always be taken into consideration. Improving the radio station now will have a few immediate results, but the long-term benefits will be much more important than the short-term. Although a common hour is almost impossible to schedule for this year, it is important to lay the groundwork now for a common hour that will be enjoyed by students and staff several and staff several years from now.

Organizations should be able to provide some kind of service to others. Whether the service is to be enjoyed by the entire campus community or 25 specific individuals should not be as important as the quality of service.

Examples of services that would be good include a blood drive, Jogathon, Dance for MS (Jerry Lewis), Car Wash for charity, Information service (Project Helpline), etc.

Finally, academic excellence is important. All students are here primarily to study. Activities should come as a second priority. As a rule, it is easier for juniors to be active in student activities than seniors due to academic requirements. It would be wise for juniors to pace themselves both academically and socially until they discover the proper balance.

Warning!

It was recommended that organizations and individuals should have the attitude of self-sacrifice, long-term objectives, and give, give, give. It is important that these recommendations be met in order to achieve a "Win-Win" situation. This would mean that student organizations would benefit now and in the future.

However, if individuals and organizations (such as Presidents Council) do not respect other groups (including future students), not only will we make it difficult for future students, but we will end up cutting our own throats.

Nevertheless, the C.C. Reader will remain dedicated to keeping the peace until the editor would be forced to resign.

Apology

Most college newspapers would have waited till the end of the year to list problems, goals, and recommendations. However, it is important that new and returning students be made aware of what other students are thinking. If the C.C. Reader would have remained entirely passive for its first issue, it would not have served students.

For those who did not finish reading this editorial or did not understand it -- our understanding and apologies.

For those who finished reading this editorial and/or did understand it -- our appreciation and thanks.

C.C. Reader
Pennsylvania State University
Capitol Campus
Route 230
Middletown, PA 17057
Office - W-129
Phone - [717] 944-4970

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The C.C. Reader has the following four-fold purpose: [1] to keep students informed about their campus community; [2] to provide editorial comment on issues facing the campus community; [3] to serve as a forum for student poetry, photographs, short stories, graphics, and other creative endeavors; [4] to serve as a learning mechanism for all students interested in the journalistic process. This includes reporting, editing, layout, typesetting, and paste-up.

All students are urged to express their views by contributing to the C.C. Reader.

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Harry H. Moyer

Copy Editor - Alice M. Coon
Activities Editor - Linda Lightner

Business Manager - John Fantone
Cartoonist - Joe Horvath

Faculty Advisors:

Dr. Elizabeth Winston, Dr. Donald Alexander

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