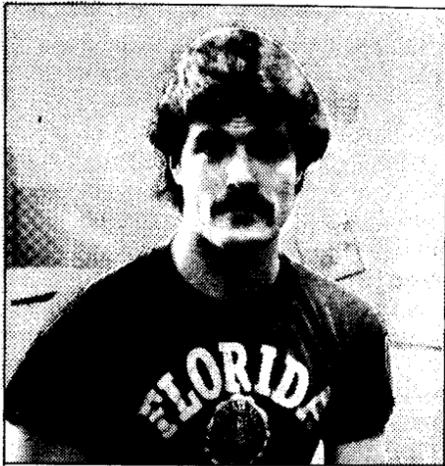


Question: Do you feel threatened by the possible re-opening of the Unit One reactor at Three Mile Island?



"No. I don't think there have been enough facts established on the dangers involved. We need an alternate source of energy—and nuclear power is this alternate source."

—Danita Coogan
Business Administration



"Yes. I would feel threatened because if it happened once, a nuclear accident can certainly happen again."

—Mark Flannery
Humanities



"No. I don't think the unit would be re-opened if it wasn't safe. There are so many regulatory precautions."

—Dave Malloy
Engineering Technology



"No. In nuclear power systems, as in any mechanical system, failures are inevitable. No system is completely infallible. This issue is naturally controversial because a failure in the unit concerns a great number of people."

—Joyce Susa
Engineering Technology

Photographs by Kim Guzzi

Who's afraid of Three Mile Island?

By Donna Kirker

As a student here you are within 5 miles of a potentially hazardous nuclear power plant, but you don't care, you don't worry, or perhaps you don't even know about Three Mile Island.

Well, don't feel guilty, because you are not alone.

For the most part, students at Capitol Campus no longer think or worry about Three Mile Island (TMI)—the site of the worst nuclear accident in the nation's history.

Of students polled, the majority had heard of Three Mile Island, but many were not aware that it was located so close to Capitol Campus.

One student from New York said, "I knew it was in Pennsylvania somewhere, but I didn't know where." Another said, "I had no idea it was so close."

Even when students knew that Capitol Campus was close to TMI, it did not affect their decision to attend classes here.

"It didn't bother me one way or the other," one student replied, while another said, "I thought it would be interesting to see."

Immediately following the accident in March of 1979, however, Capitol Campus suffered some repercussions.

Director of Capitol Campus Admissions, Mary Gundel, said enrollment "was affected right after it happened, for a year or so afterwards."

"There were married students in particular who were concerned about TMI at the

time and shortly afterwards," Gundel said.

It has been three and a half years since the accident, and Gundel reports no students ask or show any adverse concern about TMI when applying to Capitol Campus.

"It's something that's accepted at this point, and there has been nothing negative in the last year," Gundel said.

She added, "this was the first one (accident) and it got a great deal of publicity." "There are reactors in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Berwick and they are an accepted fact now...students realize there are other reactors in their own backyards," she said.

Dr. James South, Director of Student Affairs, agreed that time and media coverage has dampened student interest in the subject.

"There has been a time lapse, and its not national news as it was at the time of the incident. People's attention has moved on since," South said.

However, South stressed that several Capitol Campus professors are personally involved with TMI, and that personal involvement is the only way Capitol Campus can address the issues surrounding TMI.

Capitol Campus was not represented at the last Nuclear Regulatory Commission hearing held on November 9, in Harrisburg, even though the school's close proximity to the plant would suggest an active role in such a hearing.

South said Capitol Campus "didn't feel a need to be represented or present testimony at the NRC hearing, because it's a case of people vs. institutions."

"You as a person should take advantage of such a hearing, but as an institution that would not be a proper role for us to take," South said.

As an institution, however, Capitol Campus does have a responsibility to provide its students with every possible safeguard against any possible danger that TMI may present.

To keep a check on radiation levels, South explained, "our police officers carry dosimeters which are checked every once in a while."

Also, South said Capitol Campus has just created and approved an evacuation plan that will be distributed to students during winter term.

"The plan will give written instructions of traffic flow up to the airport connection then over to 83," South explained, adding, "it works in conjunction with local and city evacuation plans...and includes where children of students can be picked up."

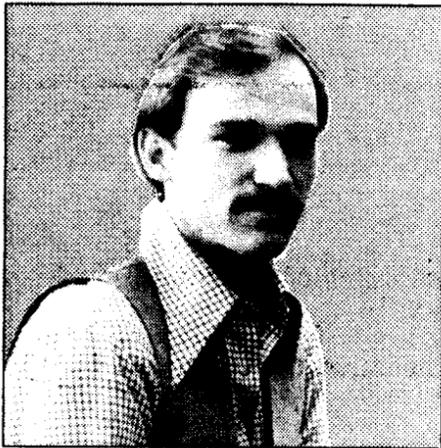
"The main goal is to get people off campus and that's where our responsibility ends...we don't have any control over what happens after students get off campus," South said.

The complete evacuation is estimated to be an hour or an hour and a half.

The evacuation plan is designed to be placed next to student telephones, so that students will have immediate access.

The evacuation plan may serve to calm parental fears about their children attending a university so close to Three Mile Island. As one student put it:

"TMI doesn't bother me, it bothers my parents."



"No, I don't feel threatened. Many people do feel threatened, however, because they do not look at the entire picture. Every method of power production has advantages and disadvantages."

—Dean Lapp
Behavioral Science and Education



"Yes, I would feel threatened because of what happened before."

—Marlene Vescovi
Engineering Technology