

Campus Forum

Budget honesty needed

Capitol Campus administrators are proud of the fact that the average student here is more than 21 years old, mature and interested in education. Professors here have said that it is a pleasure to teach to students who are mature and who are taking responsibility for their educations. It is this precise statistic that keeps campus officials buzzing to colleagues in other schools about a low attrition rate and the dedication of the student body.

So why is it, when an event happens on campus that does a fairly good job of bringing faculty and staff and students together as one community -- if only temporarily -- that the administration puts on its best paternal suit and refuses to tell the campus how much the entire affair cost?

There is quite a bit of talk these days about whether or not it is "appropriate" to tell people how much the series of events cost and that there was some concern about people "misunderstanding" the expense.

The only real misunderstanding is the way the entire campus community is being sold short.

Mind you, quite a bit of money was spent on the series of events last week that officially and lavishly installed Provost Ruth Leventhal. The *Capitol Times* can only specifically identify an expenditure of \$17,382, but the cost is way above that. The main tent which housed the ceremonies were wired with complete lighting, a public address system and electrical outlets for walk lights in the landscaping. If 15,000 invitations were mailed out for the events, even post card rate for the bunch would amount to nearly \$2,000. And, a lot of people on this campus put in extra hours and rearranged their schedules to help make the installation and picnic a success. This required payment for a lot of cooks, janitors, maintenance personnel (the landscaping was done by university employees), and the like.

Penn State's own Bryce Jordan did not have an installation ceremony in the interest of cost-effectiveness, but Provost Leventhal said visibility is a priority for Capitol, and the media event was needed. On top of all that, the administration refuses to reveal what part of the costs were covered by gifts and what was funded out of the operating budget.

Whether or not the ceremony was a good idea, whether or not the entire student or faculty or staff population agrees with the expenditure, the administration is setting a disturbing precedent by not being completely open about the budget for the event.

Every college community approaches a new leadership with a certain amount of trepidation. But right now is not the time to worry about the possibility of a division head complaining because his or her division needs equipment and there is no money for it. Now is not the time to worry about alumni donors who might be offended to learn how their dollars were spent. Indeed, they of all people have a right to know. Those possibilities should have been considered before the money was spent.

When an administration makes its bed in public, it should expect to lie in it in public as well.

Procrastination (Read this later)

Putting-IT-Off.
How do we do it?
Why do we do it?
And most important,
How do we keep from doing it?--assuming that is, in fact, a desired goal.

"Putting-it-off" is the grand art of the ability to come up with every conceivable means of diversion to keep from beginning, continuing, or completing some task. And the diversions are apt to come so easily, to be such an automatic response that we don't even realize what we are up to. It all seems so legitimate somehow.

Procrastination always seems to raise itself to an art form this time of year.

Procrastination can be caused by a variety of

reasons. A sampling includes:

- Escaping from unpleasant activities.
- Waiting for the time to be right, for it to "feel right" to do it.
- Not knowing how to do it, or how to begin.
- Thinking it will somehow magically take care of itself.

Dealing with procrastination begins with breaking down the task into manageable proportions. Then ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen to me if I did what I'm putting off right now." Now give yourself a designated time slot which you will devote exclusively to the task you've been putting off (works great for jogging and foreign languages). Stop telling yourself that you must do it well, even perfectly to do it at all. Doing is the most important thing.

Choosing the news

Journalists gather information like garbage gathers flies. Ask the average reporter; he or she almost certainly has drawers full of books, notes and old press releases. Information just naturally flows toward the nearest news man or woman; it's like a law of physics.

We don't mind. It's part of the job. What makes us pull our hair out is the job of deciding what items to publish from the endless sea of paper.

Inevitably, the reporter will throw out something that means the world to someone, somewhere, even if it's the train schedule for Singapore. That someone inevitably will stomp and complain and generally make life miserable for the reporter because HIS information was ignored. After all, if you're the ticket agent for Singapore Railways, it helps to have people know your schedule.

The problem is that the reporter must write what he or she thinks will: 1.) interest the most readers; 2.) use what limited space is available to the best advantage; and 3.) be consistent with the newspaper's editorial policy.

It's a judgement we are obligated to make. Nowhere is it written that newspapers can or should publish whatever is dropped on their doorsteps. If the *New York Times* wanted to publish only crossword puzzles on every page, it could do so, just as any other business can do what it likes.

So when, at the *Capitol Times*, we receive information from dozens of campus clubs and organizations plus dozens more off campus, all with notes saying, "Please publish this," we grit our teeth and make some tough choices. We choose what we feel will interest lots of people, what we have space to print, and what does not grossly violate our editorial philosophy.

We do not edit to offend. We edit because we must. If we trample some toes in the process, we're sorry.

Some have pointed out that, since part of our budget comes from the Student Government Association (S.G.A.), we have an obligation to S.G.A. sanctioned clubs to publicize their events free of charge.


We wish to make one point very clear: The *Capitol Times* is not a public relations service. It is not obligated to the S.G.A., the campus administration, or any other interest to publish without question whatever those groups ask. We will oppose any attempts to impose such a sweeping obligation.

We believe we do have a moral obligation to serve our readers and the campus community, and we intend to fulfill that responsibility. But we will do so as we see fit, not under constraints.

We often suggest to those who are disappointed in our coverage that they are welcome to purchase whatever advertising space is available. We offer a discount to all student organizations and we will gladly assist any advertiser in preparing an effective ad.

For those still not satisfied, we suggest *This Week at Capitol*, a publication funded specifically for the purpose of trumpeting campus events.

In closing, we offer this pledge: that we will listen to your comments about any phase of our operation and consider all suggestions for articles and announcements. We pledge to include as much interesting and informative material as possible, and to guarantee publication of all PAID advertisements for those who wish to buy them. Most of all, we will endeavor to publish a *Capitol Times* of which we can all be proud.



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