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Students voice concerns during provost's "open hours"

By Nathan Lee Gadsden

Many Penn State Harrisburg students missed an opportunity to question the top campus administrator during "Open Hours" on Nov. 29.

Despite the sparse turnout, during two two-hour sessions, Dr. Ruth Leventhal, provost and dean, responded to questions and concerns about a myriad of campus issues.

"... we must pull together students from diverse colleges and bring them up to Penn State standards in just two years."

-- Dr. Ruth Leventhal

Responding to criticism of the plus/minus grading policy, Leventhal said the system is used throughout Penn State University and was prompted several years ago by students. She suggested that students in favor of changing the present policy express their concerns to the Student Government Association.

Another issue that received extensive attention is the new non-smoking policy for campus buildings other than private residences.

Leventhal said little about the new rule except that "Violation of the new policy will be treated like an infraction

of any other campus rule."

When asked a question about the status of a proposed on-campus child care center, the provost raised concerns over limited resources, liability insurance, and the relatively few students that such a center would affect. She did say, however, that Penn State has formed a University-wide task force to study the need for such services, and PSH is continuing to look at the possibility of contracting with an outside provider for child care.

Leventhal spent a fair amount of time during the second session addressing concerns over the lack of many extra-curricular activities on campus.

She said, "The mix of students makes it difficult to create extra-curricular activities. With one-third of the students being residents and one-third being commuters, many of them night students, it's not easy to schedule activities."

She added that undergraduates make up two-thirds of the population and graduate students the other third.

About general difficulties of running PSH, Leventhal said, "The mission of the college is primarily to serve the needs of the people of the area, however we must pull together students from diverse colleges and bring them up to Penn State standards in just two years."

She said, though, on the plus side, PSH has a high retention and low mediation rate, a fact greatly due to the fact that PSH is a senior college.

Fire drill evacuation satisfies police services

By Tammie Jordan

It is a rare occasion to see Penn State students, faculty, and staff exit the Olmsted Building in a prompt and orderly fashion all at once, although such was the case on Nov. 16 as the result of a routine fire drill.

According to Charles Askey, police supervisor for campus police, such drills are required by law.

The drills are primarily conducted to ensure the proper working condition of the alarm system. The drills also give campus police a chance to measure the response time of the building's occupants.

On Nov. 16 at 12 p.m., it took the occupants of Olmsted approximately six minutes to evacuate the building. This

was a sufficient response time considering the size of the building and the number of occupants involved, said Askey.

He added that the building was evacuated without incident.

The police services department is responsible for the planning and carrying out of monthly fire drills.

Police services department is assisted by the maintenance department during these drills to ensure complete evacuation of the building and to determine the proper working order of the alarm system.

These are the only two departments notified of the drills before they occur.

In addition to Olmsted, the other buildings on campus are also tested on a regular basis, said Askey.

New library is on the books

By Nathan Lee Gadsden

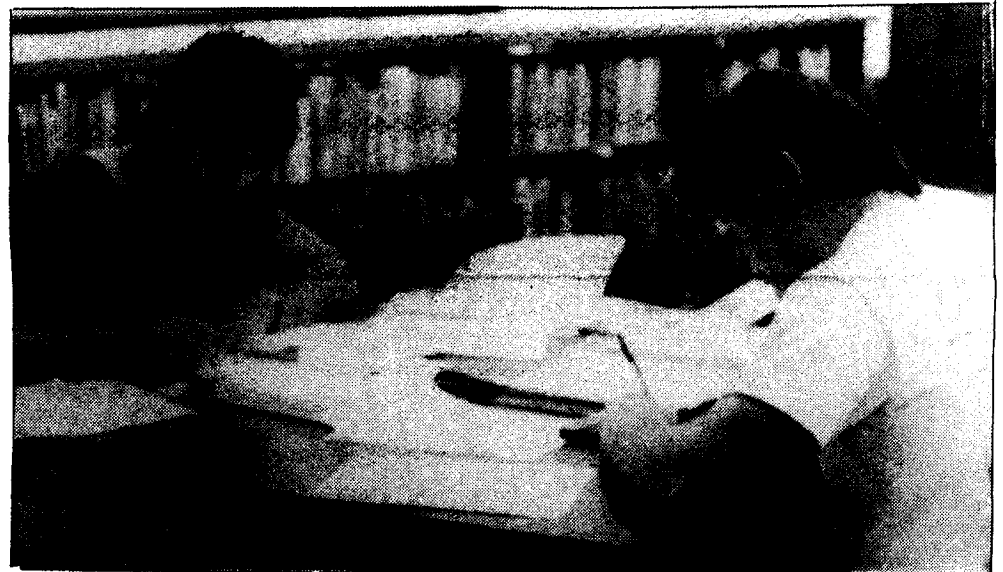
Penn State Harrisburg Provost and Dean Dr. Ruth Leventhal agreed with a member of the now-defunct Library Task Force that a new library building is a top priority for the campus.

Leventhal said the new building, which would include a learning center,

request was okayed by the governor, but did not clear the legislative hurdle. The request must now wait for consideration in the 1989 state budget process.

Leventhal is optimistic that the new library will be built by the early 1990s, which, according to Hand, will be none too soon.

He said, "Our bachelor's, master's,



Fred Fundy (EET major) and Geoffrey Fix (EET major) study feed back control systems design in the Heindel Library. Photo by Joe Kupec

ranks third on the University's priority list for capital improvement plans. She expressed hope that a reassessment of those plans will move the \$15 million project to the top of the list.

Irving Hand, Professor of State and Regional Planning, echoed Leventhal's sentiments.

The former Task Force member said, "We need the library building now. For us not to have a major library building limits our capabilities. It should be the number one priority in the entire [University] system."

According to Hand, The Library Task Force was formed seven years ago and went out of its existence after submitting its final report.

Leventhal said, "Historically, it takes five to 10 years to get a building up after the initial proposal."

The library proposal, she said, is at a point where realization depends on state government action.

Each year, the University submits a budget for capital improvements in the University system to the Pennsylvania governor. With the governor's approval, the requests are submitted to the state legislature as part of the executive budget.

This year's \$150 million Penn State

and Ph.D programs need a better library as soon as possible."

He added that the building is also necessary because of the strong Penn State presence in the Harrisburg area: "We have our campus and the University Hospital in Hershey. And the new public administration center in Harrisburg will involve us more in government."

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