

OP-ED

STUDENTS TAKE INTEREST IN LEGISLATURE

Aji Abraham
Capital Times Staff

Recently, an increased number of students have started to complain about the decisions being made in the U.S. Congress. Due to the invasion of Kuwait and the on-going budget battle, college students and the public in general have started to take an interest in the legislative process. For some reason, interest in the activities of Congress only arise when issues directly affecting one's finances are involved.

College students often complain about "Congressional irresponsibility." It is time for the American public to wake up and realize that ultimately they are responsible for their government. It is up to us as voters and future leaders to get involved in politics and make a difference. It is time that college students rallied together to make their collective voice heard. If we want policy decisions to be made that are in our best interests, we must become involved.

Public interest in Congressional activity is not something that should occur only on a sporadic basis; rather, it should be a continuous exercise. Although the average person may not see the link between the daily activities of Congress and oneself, I assure you a connection does exist.

Were you aware that a bill restricting imports of textiles, apparel, and footwear was recently passed by Congress? At first glance it would appear that the Textile Bill does not directly affect the average college student. However, upon closer examination the inherent problems of this bill are revealed. One repercussion would be increased clothing prices for consumers.

The major athletic shoe manufacturers such as Nike and Reebok produce their shoes in South East Asian countries and import them to the United States. If the Textile Bill had not been vetoed by the president, it would have limited the amount of imports to 1989 levels. This would limit supply while allowing demand to increase, thus escalating prices.

Were you aware that some "unknown" pieces of legislation outside the budget proposal could affect your pocket book? There have been numerous bills in the past few months concerning tariffs and quotas which were somehow unnoticed by the public. These bills were ignored even though they have repercussions on the prices of many common consumer items. Certainly with resources such as C-SPAN and CNN you could have been well informed on these and many other issues.

Voice from Hell...

Robert Caton
Capital Times Staff

The word for today, campers, is CASH. Can you say it with me?
I knew you could.

The problem is, even though pretty much any college student can say the word cash, that same student doesn't have a whole lot of hands-on experience with the stuff. Why is this, you ask? Well, there are a variety of reasons, but the key point seems to be...Penn State is too &#*%\$%^#! expensive!

What is the reason for the incessant tuition hikes that we must suffer through? Penn State makes gobs of money off everything from tuition, to licensed products, (PSU gets some money from EVERY T-shirt out there) to TV deals for football, to the football games themselves, (1.5 million for every home game, according to PSU figures) and gifts from the literally hundreds of thousands of alumni out there. It would take weeks to find out everything that PSU has a hand in that brings money into the University, and some things you would never find out, no matter how hard you looked.

With all these sources of income, why must the students get a ten percent (on average) hike in expenses EVERY year? Supporting the chess team at University Park can't be that expensive, can it?

The argument is that, "Well, you can get a Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL), can't you?" Yes, this is true, but thanks to our college predecessors telling the loan people to choke on their payback schedules, getting a GSL makes standing in line for six weeks in a Leningrad toilet paper queue sound like a party with Van Halen.

Filling out reams of worthless applications, making dozens of long-distance phone calls, and generally kissing the butt of everyone from the loan director down to the 'guy who scrapes the gum from the steps gets you...a loan that was about half of what you asked for, and now thanks to PSU, about a third of what you will need.

Where the hell does all this money go? I know that research must be supported, and that it is quite nice to have a football team, but can Penn State spend ALL of it? What about the monster fund drive, with profits well over a quarter of a BILLION dollars, that just ended? Where will that money go?

And, more importantly...why do WE have to pay more when such financial windfalls are obviously available elsewhere?

Sadly, Penn State truly has us by the cojones. I mean...we could go to an alleged "community college" or to "MTA Truck Driving school," and be prepared for our exciting careers in diesel repair technology...or, we could just go and be the head pickle handler at the Wawa for \$3.85 an hour...but, no, we want the BIG bucks. We can't really march up to the Shields Building at U.P. and demand a refund...we know that if we leave, our places will be filled before we even have our clothes packed for Travel Agent's School.

Penn State...you don't have to drain us, but you do...and you know there isn't a whole hell of a lot we can do about it.

Today's episode was brought to you by the number \$1,989 (per semester, without housing, without food, without day-to-day cash) and going nowhere but up.

Until next time...

POETRY WRITERS:

Anyone interested in submitting poetry for publication in the Cap Times, please contact Kelly at 948-6657 for more information.

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Earth Day Acknowledgements

Dear Capital Times Readers:

This open letter has been long overdue in thanking the many members of the Penn State Harrisburg community that helped make Earth Day 1990 a success. Signs of change are all around us, from paper products in the Lion's Den to an abundance of bicycles in the racks around campus.

Following is a list of those that helped our Earth Day efforts Provost Ruth Leventhal and her staff; *Student Activities*: Peggy O'Hara, Janet Widoff, and staff; *Maintenance and Operations*: Ken Witmer, Mike Ray, and staff; *Community Relations*: Tamara Gillis, Amy Blinn, Tracy Thomas, and staff; *Development Office*: Karen Gluntz; *Faculty*: Scott Huebner, Sue Leggett, Linda Ross, and Troy Thomas; Linda Ross's art classes for the T-shirt design, logo, and lobby rain forest; Lion Ambassadors: Monica Bouncourse, Bobbi Hulick, Nick Holz, Melissa Major, Chris Reyes, Todd Spangler, and Dave Yurasits; *ASME Members*: Kevin Minnich, Bob Hrusovsky, Richard Kile, John Clark, Dale Mark, Burce Antonioli, and Doug Thomas; *Other Students*: Jodi Quimby, Scott Snoko, Barb Metzler, and Sondra Kinsey

And I'm sure there were many others of you that participated or got involved--thank you.

In the end, it must be our own conscience and sense of right and wrong that drives us to clean up our lifestyles and the planet. After all, we are the environment and everything we do contributes to the whole. Remember the words of Gandhi: "Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it."

Sincerely,

Andy Lau
Associate Professor of Engineering